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ABSTRACT

This evaluation reports on a state program for foster care youth. Entitled the Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally (SELF), it is a county-implemented approach which seeks to develop and conduct services so as to help older adolescents who have been in substitute care prepare for the transition to independent living. The program was assessed through interviews with SELF Program coordinators and by quantitative measures. Some of the survey findings included the following: (1) Over 55 percent of the youth rated the quality of SELF-funded services "excellent," while an additional 30 percent rated it "very good"; (2) Program administrators praised the program's simplicity of procedures and paperwork, its flexibility in the use of funds, and its enhancement of county social workers' effectiveness; (3) Pre- and post-testing of clients showed statistically significant gains in self-esteem, as well as increases in the knowledge and skills needed for independent living; (4) Follow-up surveys indicated that 46 percent of SELF youth are employed and an additional 44 percent are enrolled in educational programs; and (5) A follow-up analysis of youth served with SELF funds during 1991 revealed that in the following year, 62 percent of males and 73 percent of females were not receiving public assistance. Seventeen tables provide statistical summaries. (RJM)

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DOES ANYBODY CARE?

Title IV-E-IL Adolescent Living Skills

SELF Program Evaluation Report

February 1993

Federal Grant #01-9101-MN1420

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The 1992 Annual SELF Conference "Youth in Transition" was designed for professionals working with youth ages 16 to 21 who are aging out of foster care, homeless and runaway youth, or teen parents. At the conference, after dinner, a play was enacted by The Vital Communication Theater Group of Bemidji, Minnesota. This theater group is composed of older adolescents from the Bemidji area. The performance they did was about desperation and suicidal thinking among adolescents. Some of the youth had participated in the writing of the play. The performance was a series of monologues, in which the stories and feelings of different youth were told. A common refrain, at the end of each monologue was,

"I'm calling.

Does anybody hear me?

Does anybody care?"

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1992 Title IV-E-IL SELF Program Evaluation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minnesota's program of Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally (SELF) makes federal Title IV-E-IL funds available to counties and private agencies. These funds are to develop, implement, and conduct services designed to help older adolescents who have been in substitute care prepare for the transition to independent living. The United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families requires states that receive Title IV-E-IL funds to report

> *. . . information for use by the Secretary in assessing and evaluating the findings and measuring the achievements of the state's Independent Living programs, in developing comprehensive information and data from which decisions can be made with respect to the future of such programs, and in providing information and recommendations to the Congress.*

In 1992 a large-scale evaluation of Minnesota's Title IV-E-IL SELF Program was conducted. Among the major findings of this evaluation are the following:

- The quality of SELF-funded service to youth is rated "excellent" by over 55% of those served, and "very good" by an additional 30%. Representative comments include: *"It helped me buy tools to become a mechanic. Without that money, I could never have been able to buy them for myself."* and *"This group and our group leader is the best thing that ever happened to me."*

- The most frequent comments about the SELF program from 20 county program administrators separately interviewed are that the SELF Program is outstanding in simplicity of procedures and paperwork, in flexibility of use of funds to address the greatest needs of eligible youth, and in enhancing the ability of county social workers to serve their clients well. Many of the county workers reported that SELF funds are the only resource available to youth who need decent clothes for a job interview, textbooks for vocational training, or a bicycle for transportation to a place of work.

- Pre- and post-testing of clients who attended SELF-funded independent living skills groups at five different sites showed statistically significant gains by the youth in self-esteem, and particularly substantial gains (11%) on tests of knowledge and attitudes considered vital or important for independent living.

- 90-day follow-up surveys of youth who completed SELF-funded service show that 46% are employed full-time or half-time, and an additional 44% are enrolled in educational programs.

- Computer system follow-up of youth served with SELF funds during 1991 shows that in the following year, 62% of those male youth and 73% of the female youth were <u>not</u> receiving General Assistance, AFDC, or Food Stamp public assistance on any of the four quarterly dates checked.

- Many of the youth served with SELF funds have been the victims of horrible sexual and physical abuse and neglect for many years. The resources of the SELF Program have enabled county workers to help many such youth recover a sense of self-worth, and even progress to the point of helping others like themselves. This is according to actual case history reports by county program administrators.

Acknowledgements

The following individuals made major contributions to this evaluation:

The Youth of Minnesota who have been in foster care, many of whose stories are told here, and many of whom participated in the follow-up survey.

Denise Revels Robinson, Director, Family and Children's Services Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services, who advocated strongly for this research, and empowered both the evaluation and the evaluator.

Lyle K. Johnson, Claire D. Hill, and Joan M. Truhler, Program Advisors of the SELF Program, who have built the SELF Program in Minnesota, and who contributed much of their time to assisting with this evaluation.

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Daniel Wiener
Susan Witzke

Background and Introduction

One of Minnesota's array of innovative social service programs is for youth in care who are making a transition to adulthood. The program is called SELF, or Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally. It is federally funded under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for Independent Living Initiatives. The funding is for youth who have been in foster care and are soon to be emancipated, generally at age 18.

The program originated in Congressional awareness that children who have been taken away from their homes, perhaps as small children, often have suffered a series of unsatisfactory out-of-home placements. This unsettled life often has left the children quite unprepared to face the demands of independent living in our society. Such youth have populated our homeless shelters. They have been found to suffer severe depression.

Minnesota has been in the forefront of Title IV-E-IL initiatives since their beginning. In 1988 testimony before a United States House of Representatives Ways and Means subcommittee, Dodie Truman Borup, then Commissioner, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said

> *In providing technical assistance to the other states, ACYF has used Arizona and Minnesota as models. . . . Minnesota under a 1986 ACYF discretionary demonstration grant, developed model independent living programs in three rural counties. This demonstration effort was closely monitored in the state office, and when the Public Law 99-272 money became available, it was used as a basis for statewide planning. That's a nice success story.*

The Honorable Robert T. Matsui testified,

> *It is crucial that these foster care children and teens ultimately become productive citizens. They are our stake in the future. Although there are no easy solutions or quick fixes for the long neglected needs of foster care youth, there are changes which are within our immediate reach. It is simple common sense to seek to invest in programs for young people which help them grow up physically and emotionally healthy, well educated, and self confident in their ability to create a better world.*

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has required the states to collect and provide to the federal office quantitative data. The data are to contribute to evaluation of the outcomes of programs funded through the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiatives. The Federal Administration and Congress have an important responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all such uses of public funds.

The states, including Minnesota, have provided the numerical data requested. It has appeared, however, that such data raise more questions than they answer. The youth served are difficult to locate after they leave public care. Large differences in program statistics among the states are difficult to interpret. They may be due to different methods of gathering data, different approaches to providing service, and/or different socio-economic conditions prevailing in the different states.

In 1992, Minnesota made its greatest commitment and most thorough effort yet, to provide answers concerning the outcomes of its Title IV-E-IL SELF Program initiative for youth. This report is to present these answers to those concerned with the Title IV-E-IL Program and youth in care.

Evaluation Design

The 1992 evaluation of Minnesota's Title IV-E-IL SELF Program included many complementary measures of client outcomes and program impact. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods were employed.

Program impact was assessed most comprehensively through an extensive series of interviews with SELF Program coordinators at the county level. Immediate knowledge of the impact of the SELF Program, including its strengths, limitations, and results, is perhaps most concentrated in the SELF Coordinators--key staff responsible for the program at each of the county agencies that participate in the SELF Program.

Interviews with county SELF Program coordinators were done by the SELF Program Evaluation Coordinator in twenty counties (nearly one-fourth of the participating counties) throughout Minnesota. The interviews were between one and two hours in length. Questions generally were open-ended and unrestricted in an attempt to gather the SELF coordinators' breadth and depth of knowledge of the program and its contexts. The interviews also included a focus on all or several of the following 13 questions:

1. *Please tell me in your own words what the SELF Program is.*

2. *How long have you been involved personally with the Self Program?*

3. *What is your training and professional background?*

4. *How does the SELF Program work in your county?*

5. *How do you decide which youth, out of all of the eligible youth, will receive SELF-funded service?*

6. *How do you decide what service(s) to provide to each youth?*

7. *What do you think are the strengths of the SELF Program?*

8. *What do you think are the weaknesses of the SELF Program?*

9. *What do you think are the results of the SELF Program?*

10. *Purely theoretically, if the money made available to your SELF Program were doubled, how would it change what you do?*

11. *Purely theoretically, if the money made available to your SELF Program were reduced by half, how would it change what you do?*

12. *Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the SELF Program?*

13. *Could you please tell me about some of the clients who have been served by the SELF Program in your county?*

The results of the interviews are summarized in this report. Authorized edited transcripts of the interviews are available on a limited basis as a separate appendix volume to this evaluation report.

Quantitative indicators of program status and outcomes were based on three separate but overlapping samples of youth served by the SELF Program during federal fiscal years 1991 and 1992.

Sample I consists of 51 youth from five different independent living skills groups conducted at various locations in Minnesota during the second half of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1992. These youth were administered pre- and post-test measures of independent living skills knowledge, appropriate attitudes, and self-esteem.

Sample II consists of 315 youth (approximately 30% of the total) served by the SELF Program in any way during FFY1991. The Public Assistance status of these youth was recorded and analyzed based on three-month intervals of FFY1992, the year following their service.

Sample III consists of 196 youth served during FFY1992 who, according to their county SELF Program coordinator, probably have completed all service from the SELF Program. These youth completed survey forms on which they rated the quality of service they received. The survey also includes basic indicators of independent living status; e.g., housing situation, educational status, employment status, and public assistance status. These youth also are being surveyed 90 days later and one year later.

The third sample of youth is most appropriate for long-term follow-up and assessment of client outcomes. Other client samples or general client population statistics reflect mainly information on clients who are continuing as open county cases and for whom there is no immediate intention of independent living. When possible, local SELF Program coordinators often start preparing youth for independent living two or more years in advance of the necessity. The desirability of such approaches is recognized implicitly in the Title IV-E-IL age eligibility range of 16 to 21 years. For Sample III clients, independent living is most likely to be an immediate goal and fact.

One important aspect of the SELF Program is provision of innovative services to eligible youth by private agencies. Several private agencies are funded for such services through separate grants from the SELF Program. Youth who were served by these private agency programs are included as a matter of course in all statistics and outcome measures analyzed in this report. Evaluation of the separate impact of each of those individual grant programs is planned for 1993.

A Short History of the SELF Program

The SELF Program in Minnesota (now a part of the federal Title IV-E Independent Living Initiatives Program) began in 1986 as a Minnesota Department of Human Services response to a federal request for proposals. Seline Graham was hired to write the proposal, working for Carol Watkins who then was supervisor of Children's Services at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. At that time, Children's Services organizationally was a Section rather than a Division. Later, the Children's Services Section merged with the Child Protection Section to form the Children's Services Division (now named Family and Children's Services Division).

The initial funding received was in the form of a 15-month $60,000 grant from the Children's Bureau of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. It was for the teaching of independent living skills in three rural Minnesota counties (Beltrami, Freeborn, and Wright). The counties volunteered to participate in this grant project. Each of the three counties hired a person half-time for nine months to do this project.

The pilot programs included instruction of qualifying youth in living skills training including job seeking, job interviewing, holding a job, finding an apartment, good interpersonal communication, and related topics. It was evident from the beginning that there is a wide array of ways in which youths can

learn independent living skills. These ways include attending courses or special programs at vocational-technical schools, mentoring, tutoring, group training, and/or using the services of private agencies.

The pilot project had three components: group training, job experience, and individual adult mentors. A manual was written by Lyle K. Johnson and distributed nationally as part of the contract which was titled "Living Skills Training in Groups." One intention of the initial grants was that the grantees would seek continuation funding from other sources.

Beltrami County hired Sue Liedl for the pilot program. At the time of this report she still is working for that county on the SELF program. After the Title IV-E-IL funding was instituted, Bemidji State University contracted with the SELF Program to conduct a 30-day wilderness canoe trip for qualifying youth from anywhere in Minnesota. On the canoe trip the youth were to learn how to work with a group. They also were to gain feelings of competency. Bruce Slickman worked with that pilot program. That particular program did not obtain continuation funding from other sources.

The $60,000 federal grant was approved and ready for "moving on" in 1986. It was <u>not</u> at that time Title IV-E money. It was initiated from the Federal Department of Health and Human services by the same agency that now administers Title IV-E money. All $60,000 of the grant was used for the salaries of the three half-time county workers and the half-time director of the program, Lyle Johnson. Minnesota's grant was one of ten

nationwide. Some of the ten grants were to states and some were to private agencies.

Minnesota's program started in the Fall of 1986. The process of hiring a person to direct the program was somewhat lengthy. Lyle Johnson was hired and started work on the program November 1, 1986. The federal contact person (grant manager) for all ten of the federal demonstration grants was Cecilia Sudia. Minnesota's contract included a requirement for writing a manual for potential use for similar programs nationwide. Lyle Johnson's responsibilities were to direct the program, train the staff that were hired to do the program, and act as their consultant and supervisor. Under the terms of the grant, eligible clients were youth 16 to 21 in foster care during that year.

The response of the communities to the grant was exciting. There were many contributions from the communities to the program. Approximately twelve youths participated in each county. The grant gave Minnesota a head start on the rest of the country. The Title IV-E-IL money that was allocated the following year for all of the United States was for exactly the same kind of activity.

The money for Title IV-E-IL (independent living initiative) was appropriated by Congress. The funds were intended to be available in 1986. They actually were made available for FFY1988.

The rationale for the new funding was that 16-21 year old youth who have been in foster care and soon will be emancipated adults are likely to lack any of a number of basic independent living skills. They are likely to lack such skills as a consequence of receiving foster care rather than traditional parenting. For several

years there has been a movement (not from the Minnesota Department of Human Services) advocating that the age of eligibility be lowered to age 14. For some of the youth, the age of 16 might seem later than desirable for an effective intervention. Other youths might have been out of foster care already by their sixteenth birthday, perhaps having run away or otherwise lost contact with social services. This appears to be the case particularly for American Indian youth.

Initially, Lyle Johnson reported to Carol Watkins, then supervisor for the Children's Services Section. Later, she created a new position of supervisor for Adolescent Services. Barbara McBain was hired for this position, reporting to Carol Watkins. In July 1987, Lyle Johnson's position was converted from half-time to full-time, which became possible with the new Title IV-E-IL funds. Two other staff hired were an evaluator/grant monitor (Joan Hiller) and an additional program advisor (Hope Anderson). Hope Anderson left after one month due to a family crisis. She was replaced by Claire Hill.

Use of the acronym SELF (Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally) was the idea of Joan Hiller. Its use is unique to the Minnesota Title IV-E-IL program. Texas uses the acronym PAL (Preparation for Adult Living) for their Title IV-E-IL program. In many states, and conversationally, the Title IV-E-IL program is called the Independent Living Initiative or Independent Living Program.

Use of the new Title IV-E-IL funds started October 1, 1987 (through September 30, 1988) which was FFY1988. That first year,

federal guidelines allowed service only to "IV-E" youth (youth in foster care who came from AFDC families). Starting the next FFY, federal guidelines changed to allow service with Title IV-E-IL funds to any youth age 16-21 who had been in out-of-home placement *at some time during that fiscal year.* This guideline was in effect for the second and third FFYs (October 1, 1988 through September 30, 1990) of the Title IV-E-IL program. Starting October 1, 1990 (the beginning of the fourth FFY of Title IV-E-IL funding) client eligibility was expanded to include all youth age 16-21 who had been in foster care at any time since their sixteenth birthday. Thus, in the five years of operation of the SELF program, there have been two significant changes in federal guidelines regarding client eligibility for the program.

SELF Program staff decided that one good use of the new Title IV-E-IL funds would be for grants to private agencies to develop and implement new approaches to fostering independent living skills for qualifying youth. This was to improve the SELF Program's ability to serve youth effectively. It also was to provide needed additional program resources to counties that are not equipped to provide such needed services themselves. Some of the funds were allocated for those purposes.

In the Fall of 1987, the Minnesota Department of Human Services solicited proposals to provide to qualifying youth (at the time "IV-E youths"), innovative services designed to foster independent living skills. Grants to programs were awarded and the programs started operating in the Spring of 1988.

The grant programs were designed to provide services to

clients referred by participating counties. The counties were the ones who were able to determine if youth were eligible for the SELF program (for use of Title IV-E-IL funds). The first SELF grant programs were:

Bemidji State University Outdoor Program Center
Bethany Crisis Shelter/Camp Widjiwagan
Face-to-Face Health and Counseling Service
Hennepin County Community Services Foster Parent Training
Professional Association of Treatment Homes (PATH)
Upper Midwest American Indian Center

Originally, the grant programs provided free to the counties client services for qualifying youth. In 1990, some private agency programs were developed that required counties to use SELF funds to pay for part of the cost of service.

The second FFY of the Independent Living Initiative (October 1, 1988--September 30, 1989), the SELF Program at the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) issued a new request for proposals (RFP). This RFP again was for innovative services designed to foster independent living skills for qualifying youth. Most of the grantees have used group work as the method of service delivery to the youth. In the second FFY of the program, a few new grant programs were added and a few of the programs from the first year did not receive continuation funding. The third FFY of the Independent Living Initiative the SELF Program, together with participating counties, assessed needs for specific types of independent living programs to enhance service to eligible youth. Based on the needs assessment, the RFP for the third year was much more specific and prescriptive in its

requirements than were the earlier RFPs.

Since the beginning of the SELF program, counties and grant programs have been permitted to include in SELF funded groups additional youth who might not meet SELF program eligibility guidelines, *provided they enhance or do not detract from the quality of service to the SELF-eligible clients*. This occasionally is desirable, for instance in a situation where otherwise there might not be enough clients for a viable group. Counties also have been encouraged to work collaboratively in such situations. Several different counties may refer their qualifying youth to a group which might be organized by one of those counties.

Minnesota's initial (demonstration or pilot) grant ended in March 1988. The last months of the grant and the first months of the Title IV-E-IL program overlapped. The manual which was produced under the grant was distributed to every state in the country and every county in Minnesota.

The total initial Title IV-E-IL funding was $45,000,000 per year for three years. Of that amount, the initial Title IV-E-IL allocation to Minnesota was $734,000, which has been Minnesota's base funding, approximately, ever since. In the fourth year, an additional $5,000,000 was allocated, from which Minnesota received an extra amount of about $80,000.

Starting the fifth FFY of the program, the federal Title IV-E-IL office introduced a new component to the formula for allocation of program funds to the states. This new component was based on matching in-kind services or funds by the states, counties, or communities within the states. DHS Financial

Management determined that no state or county funds should be claimed for the purpose of Title IV-E-IL matching. Doing so might jeopardize other federal funding. Therefore, all claims of matching funds in Minnesota must be unrelated to county budgets.

Qualifying in-kind services include contributions of volunteer time, direct cash contributions by some other organizations or agencies, contributions of space or food for SELF programs, contributions of retreat centers free or at specially discounted rates, and similar types of activity.

The Minnesota SELF Program allocates to counties $.50 for every dollar of qualifying in-kind services they document for submission for federal matching. Documentation of qualifying in-kind services is required in the contracts of SELF grant programs. Those programs are not reimbursed by the SELF Program office for in-kind services. Until this time, the SELF Program has not capped the amount of in-kind services for which counties can claim matching reimbursement. However, the federal Title IV-E-IL office has a cap on reimbursement, and the SELF Program currently exceeds that amount.

In 1992, Minnesota needed $296,000 of documented in-kind services to claim the full amount of federal matching funds for which it was eligible. About $300,000 of in-kind services was documented by the counties, and about $30,000 of in-kind services was documented by the grantees, so there was about $35,000 more than was needed.

The federal Title IV-E-IL rules allow states to use a 24-month cycle, rather than the simple FFY, for claiming the

matching funds. To pay the matching funds, the federal budget for the program increased to approximately $60,000,000 and then approximately $70,000,000.

The federal contact people for the Title IV-E-IL program from the beginning have been Mike Ambrose, and Irene Hammond who reports to him. Rhonna Cook, with WESTAT (a private company), was retained under contract to the federal office for centralized evaluation of some aspects of the use of Title IV-E-IL funds. The federal contact people have seen their role as supporting innovative, creative, and active approaches to serving the population of clients.

There have been many significant developments and changes in the SELF Program since its early years. Staff changes have included: the departure of Barbara McBain in 1989; the work of Denise Revels Robinson as Supervisor of Adolescent Services from 1990 to 1992, when she became Director of Family and Children's Services Division; the departure of Joan Hiller in 1989; the work of Mary Cider as Program Advisor for Grants and Evaluation in 1990; the work of Joan M. Truhler as Program Advisor/Grants Manager from 1990 to the present; and the work of Paul H. Wiener as SELF Program Evaluation Coordinator starting in 1992.

Other significant developments in the SELF Program include: Close coordination with the Refugee Unaccompanied Minor program in Minnesota; development and regular meetings of a SELF Program Advisory Board consisting of county social service staff and non-profit agency staff; and continuing

development of regional living skills programs to serve rural areas of the state.

The SELF Program has observed carefully the federal regulations regarding use of the funds. For instance, the funds are not supposed to be used for payment of room or board. The SELF Program has not allowed any such use of SELF funds, even when there has been representation of compelling need.

Procedures of the Program

Most of the material in this section is adapted from The SELF Program Handbook, 1992.

Client Eligibility

Funds may be used to provide services to adolescents ages 16-21 who currently are in substitute care, or have been in substitute care at any time after age 16, and have the potential to become self-sufficient adults. Substitute care is defined as a county approved, licensed out-of-home placement. Examples include: foster care; residential treatment; group homes; and shelter care. Service may begin any time after a youth is identified as SELF eligible and may continue to age 21, regardless of placement status or living situation.

Permitted Use of Funds

Creative use of funds is encouraged so that the individual needs of each youth can be met. While restrictions are minimal, indirect and direct services must promote development of life skills and a successful transition to adulthood. They cannot include room and board, per diem costs of substitute care, damage and utility deposits, or rent on apartments and dormitory rooms.

Disbursal of Funds

Funds are disbursed in two main ways:

1. Allocations to county social service agencies.

Each September, county allocations are calculated based on the number of youth who met eligibility guidelines in May and the number of youth who received SELF-funded services in the previous program year. The allocation formula is used only as a method of determining funding levels and does not identify or limit the number of youth who can be served. The SELF funds allocation formula solely is intended to ensure equitable distribution of SELF funds among the participating counties.

2. Grants to Private Agencies

Additional funds are available to private non-profit agencies for development of new models, implementation of pilot projects, and provision of specialized services to adolescents in various locations throughout the state. Grants are awarded through a Request for Proposals process.

Assessment, Planning, and Reporting

Each youth served with SELF funds must have an individual needs assessment and training plan. The goal is to determine and prioritize services needed by each youth to ensure a successful transition to independent living. Individual plans must be written once each year and filed in the youth's case record. Participating counties must report program progress and status of funds to the Minnesota DHS SELF Program office once each year. Each participating county must complete a Final Report (sample form is included in the Appendix) due October 31 (after the end of the program year). This report provides information concerning:

1. Direct services provided to youth.

2. Expenditures for direct and indirect services, verified by

the county accounting department.

3. Problems, solutions, unresolved issues, and program changes; an overall evaluation of the SELF program; and recommended changes.

Definition of Service

The SELF Program has defined "service" to clients through the SELF program as any activity that increases the client's competency for living as an adult independently. The attempt to deliver service is considered service, even if the client is resistant or declines further involvement. Since time and effort has been expended on the client's behalf, this activity is counted as service from the SELF program and reimbursed as such. Apparently, however, Hennepin County (by far the largest county in terms of clients served and overall allocation) has not claimed such cases for SELF program reimbursement. They also might not have claimed, for SELF program reimbursement, considerable numbers of cases who are receiving group work or other clearly eligible services from programs such as Project SOLO in Minneapolis.

Thus, there is a question of whether eligible clients who are receiving eligible services should count as being served by the SELF program, if SELF reimbursement funds are not sought for them. Clearly it would be misleading to consider those clients as belonging to the category of clients who are eligible but *not* receiving service. This issue should be resolved.

Description of Clients

Each year demographic data are collected on youth served through use of SELF funds. These data are collected systematically by each county participating in the SELF Program. They are recorded on machine-scanable forms and sent to the State SELF Program office for tabulation. Following are descriptions of youth served by the SELF Program in Minnesota in Federal Fiscal Year 1992.

CLIENT RACE/ETHNICITY BY GENDER TABLE 1

YOUTH SERVED BY SELF PROGRAM IN FFY1992
(data available for 1,355 youth on both measures)

Race/Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total #	Percent*
AFRICAN AMERICAN	55	67	122	9%
AMERICAN INDIAN	37	36	73	5%
ASIAN AMERICAN	100	41	141	10%
HISPANIC	25	21	46	3%
WHITE	395	521	916	68%
OTHER	15	13	28	2%
Other Youth of Color				2%
Af.Am./Hispanic	1	0	1	
Am.Ind./Af.Am.	0	4	4	
Am.Ind./Hispanic	3	0	3	
Am.Ind./white	5	7	12	
Asian/Af.Am.	1	1	2	
Asian/white	3	1	4	
Hispanic/white	1	2	3	
TOTAL	641	714	1,355	100%

*Note: Due to rounding, percents may not total exactly 100%

In Table 1, the relatively large proportion of Asian

American youth served by the SELF program mainly is attributable to the fact that Minnesota is a national center for Asian refugees. Most (77%) of the Asian American youth served by the SELF program in 1992 were identified as refugee unaccompanied minors. While youth of color constitute about 32% of all youth served by the SELF Program statewide, they are a majority (about 59%) of youth served by the SELF Program in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties combined.

CLIENT AGE BY GENDER — TABLE 2

YOUTH SERVED BY SELF PROGRAM IN FFY1992
(data available for 1,359 youth on both measures)

	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
16 years old	127	18%	95	15%	222	16%
17 years old	275	38%	218	34%	493	36%
18 years old	211	29%	177	28%	388	29%
19 years old	72	10%	89	14%	161	12%
20 years old	24	3%	48	8%	72	5%
21 years old	10	1%	13	2%	23	2%
	719	53%	640	47%	1,359	100%

Age in years is calculated as of October 1, 1992 for Table 2. These data show that counties heavily concentrate their use of SELF funds on 16 to 18-year-old youth who are their legal responsibility in most cases. Comments in interviews, reported

later in this report, indicated that overextended county social service agencies simply do not have the time or resources to locate 19-21 year old youth who are eligible for SELF-funded service, and might benefit from service, but are neither the legal responsibility of the counties nor are currently open cases.

DISABLING CONDITION — TABLE 3

YOUTH SERVED BY SELF PROGRAM IN FFY1992
(data available for 778 youth with disabling conditions)

Disabling Condition	Single Condition	Selected In Combination	Percent of Those With Disabling Condition
Emotional/Behavioral	349	112	59%
Chemical Dependency	82	64	19%
Developmental Dis.	31	23	7%
Specific Learning Dis.	33	50	11%
Multiple Disabilities	15	0	2%
Hearing/Speech/or Sight	11	8	2%
	521	257	100%

Table 3 shows that a large proportion (about 57%) of all youth served by the SELF Program are identified as having one or more of the disabling conditions listed. These conditions of the clients also were described often by county SELF program coordinators during the interviews done for this evaluation study. One of the county coordinators interviewed said that the frequency and severity of these problems among youth in care, combined with the accelerating trend toward placement of youth in the least

restrictive setting possible, leads to increasing needs for specialized training of foster care providers.

REASON FOR PLACEMENT — TABLE 4
YOUTH SERVED BY SELF PROGRAM IN FFY1992
(data available for 1,368 youth served)

Reason For Placement	Total Times Reason Selected	Percent of Youth for Whom Reason Selected
1. Behavior Problem	574	42%
2. Parent(s) Unable to Care for Youth	453	33%
3. Parent(s) Unwilling to Care for Youth	310	23%
4. Delinquency	253	18%
5. Neglect	248	18%
6. Physical Abuse	220	16%
7. Sexual Abuse	213	16%
8. Substance Abuse	205	15%
9. Parental Substance Abuse	175	13%
10. Termination of Parental Rights	94	7%
11. Adoption Disruption	49	4%
12. Death of Parent	39	3%
13. Other	194	14%
Total	3,927	

Table 4, together with Table 3, shows the extent of problems of youth in care. The large total number of reasons cited by the county workers shows that most often there are several contributing reasons for an out-of-home placement. This makes clear that for many of the youth who are eligible for SELF-funded service, jobs and training programs alone would not seem likely to prepare the youths for successful independent living.

Previous Evaluations

Since the beginning of the Title IV-E-IL SELF Program in Minnesota, in the form of its original precursor pilot program, data pertaining to the program routinely have been collected and reported to United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The final report on the initial pilot program, titled "Living Skills Education and Support for Older Adolescents in Foster Care," included the results of four outcome measures. Those measures were: pre- and post-intervention assessments of client self-esteem; client self-assessment of skill gains; foster parent ratings of client skill gains; and county coordinator ratings of impact of the program on each client participating.

Client self-esteem was measured with the Janis-Field Feelings of Inadequacy Scale, a very good instrument which also was used in the 1992 Evaluation of the SELF Program. The Janis-Field is described in more detail later in this report. In 1987, data based on 21 clients showed increases in client self-esteem that were not, however, statistically significant.

Client self-assessment of independent living skills knowledge that year showed that 25 of 26 clients perceived improvement in themselves during the course of their group training. 65% of foster parents of those same youth judged that the youth in their care improved in knowledge of independent living skills during group training.

According to the ratings of county coordinators of the impact of the program on clients, the program had a "significant impact" on 20 (61%) of the clients, "some impact" on seven (21%) of the clients, "minimal impact" on 5 (15%) of the clients, and "no impact" on 1 client.

The final report of Minnesota's Title IV-E-IL SELF Program regarding 1988 noted information on 60 youth who had left substitute care after having been served by the program. Of those 60 youth, 6 were in vocational school, 12 were attending college, 24 were maintaining their own apartments and working full- or part-time, 1 was living with a parent, 1 was in the Job Corps, and 10 could not be located.

The final report of Minnesota's Title IV-E-IL SELF Program regarding 1989 included the results of a survey completed and returned by 211 (approximately one-third) of the youth served by the program during that year. On a ten-point scale with 0 representing a rating of "poor" and 10 representing a rating of "excellent," the average rating of the SELF Program activities by the youth was 7.5 . By self-report, 90% of the youth were continuing their education and half of the youth were working at the time of the survey.

The final report of Minnesota's Title IV-E-IL SELF Program regarding 1990 included the results of a survey completed and returned by 166 youth, about 10% of those served. 69% of those youth reported that they were "Very Satisfied" with the SELF Program, 15% reported that the program was "Acceptable," 6% said they were "Dissatisfied," and from 10% there was no response.

27 (16%) of the youth reported that they were in independent living arrangements. Of those 27, 6 were male and 21 were female. "Money management" was cited frequently as the most important thing learned by the youth in their independent living skills training.

Client Outcomes--1992

The 1992 evaluation includes a wide variety of follow-up client outcome measures. As described earlier, these measures are based on three separate but overlapping samples of youth served by the SELF Program during federal fiscal years 1991 and 1992.

Sample I consists of 51 youth from five different independent living skills groups conducted at various locations in Minnesota during the second half of FFY1992. These youth were administered pre- and post-test measures of independent living skills knowledge, attitudes, and self-esteem.

Sample II consists of 315 youth (approximately 30% of the total) served by the SELF Program in any way during FFY1991. Public Assistance of these youth was tracked for three-month intervals during FFY1992, the year following their service.

Sample III consists of 196 youth served during FFY1992 who, in the judgement of their local SELF Program coordinator, probably have completed all service from the SELF Program. These youth completed survey forms on which they rated the quality of service they received from the SELF Program. The survey also includes basic indicators of independent living status, e.g. housing situation, educational status, employment status, and public assistance status. These youth also are being surveyed 90 days later, and one year later.

The third sample of youth is particularly appropriate for long-term follow-up and assessment of client outcomes. Other

client sample or general client population statistics tend to be dominated by information on clients who are continuing as open county cases, and for whom there is no immediate intention of independent living. Local SELF Program coordinators often start preparing youth for independent living two or more years in advance of the necessity. The desirability of such approaches is recognized implicitly in the Title IV-E-IL age eligibility range of 16 to 21 years.

Independent Living Skills Group Clients

Group work with eligible youth is a major emphasis of the SELF Program. According to data gathered in 1991, the average SELF-funded independent living skills group consists of ten sessions that last at least two hours each. Average group enrollment is 10 participants. Two-thirds of participating youth attend more than 90% of the sessions, reflecting substantial stability of the groups. Interview reports indicate that group attendance stability often is the result of years of experience learning effective methods of attracting and retaining youth for the group training.

Curriculum possibilities exceed the number of hours available in any program. Coordinators base curriculum choices on their own judgement, training skills, available resources, and youth needs. Overall, the groups most often include content on money management, apartment rental and maintenance, finding and keeping a job, nutrition and food preparation, and interpersonal

relationships. They also often include the topics of career assessment and planning, sexuality and sex education, self-esteem, use of leisure time, legal rights, community resources, decision making and values, insurance, health, and first aid.

Because of the major emphasis of the SELF Program on group work with youth, the 1992 evaluation design included measurement of youth gains in knowledge and attitude, and youth gains in self-esteem. These were measured on a pre- and post-intervention basis.

Knowledge and Attitude Gains, Sample I

For youth participating in SELF-funded independent living skills groups, knowledge and attitude gains were assessed in the following manner. A large amount and variety of literature on independent living skills training was reviewed for specific content. The specific items sought were facts or attitudes deemed essential or important for success in independent living. Literature reviewed included general instructional materials for youth, health education curricula, jobs and training information, and orientation booklets for recent immigrants. The basic educational needs of recent immigrants are similar in some ways to needs of youth with living skills deficits.

The compiled items of information and attitudes then were used as the basis for 65 multiple-choice test items addressing a broad range of content. These were distributed to SELF-funded independent living skills group leaders. Each group leader was

asked to select 25 of the items representing knowledge or attitudes they were teaching in their own group. Thus, each group leader was enabled to construct and use her or his own test, while information could be gathered statewide on a core set of 65 items. This process was intended to provide maximum appropriateness and simplicity of testing for group leaders and program participants. It also provides for a relatively easy to interpret, generalized set of test items for centralized analysis.

Results

At the time of this report, completed multiple-choice forms or scores, pre- and post-intervention, were submitted for 51 youth from five different independent living skills groups conducted at various locations in Minnesota. One group leader, with the approval of the SELF Program evaluation coordinator, constructed 12 additional multiple-choice items for use with her own group. In the future, those items also will be available for use with other groups. With those additions, the analysis presented in the following pages shows the total available pool of 77 test items. All together, group leaders used 61 of the 77 items. Sixteen of the items were not used by any of the group leaders this year.

Knowledge and attitude gain by the young people during the course of the independent living skills groups is strongly evident. Overall, 71% of the items were answered correctly by youth on the pre-test, and 82% of the items were answered correctly by youth on the post-test. These results show very

substantial gains by the participants. The difference is highly significant statistically, but more importantly reflects many gains in knowledge that may have consequential positive impact in the future lives of the young people served.

For example, 18% of the young people had a major deficit in knowledge, which was improved during the classes, about the degree of effectiveness of commonly used methods of birth control. Several of the young people showed serious, potentially dangerous attitudes about the propriety of violence in relationships. Such attitudes were corrected during the group training. For two of the young people, hazardous ideas were corrected concerning how to extinguish a grease fire on a stove. Major gains were shown by youth in the groups regarding job-search networking, job interviewing techniques, apartment renting factors, budgeting, economy in shopping, and health considerations.

Some items show small changes in the wrong direction, i.e., fewer participants answered an item correctly on the post-test than on the pre-test. These probably reflect neglect of teaching of the knowledge addressed by the item, or perhaps mistaken teaching of content reflected in the item. In some cases, there could be honest disagreement concerning what is true or appropriate. That is likely to happen with any lengthy test of items that concern meaningful areas. Test results for all 77 items are reproduced on the following pages. This report includes the number of youth who answered the item at both the beginning and end of their group training, the percent and number who answered the item correctly on the pre-test, and who answered the item correctly on the post-test.

77 Test Items
on Knowledge of Facts and Attitudes for Independent Living

MN Title IV-E-IL (SELF) Program
1992

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test (#)	Percent who answered correctly Post-test (#)	
32	75% (24)	91% (29)	1. If you are looking for a job, you should tell this to a. friends. b. relatives. c. teachers. d. all of the above. e. none of the above.
36	86% (31)	94% (34)	2. The best time to show up for a job interview is a. 45 minutes early. b. 10 minutes early. c. 5 minutes late. d. 10 minutes late. e. 45 minutes late.
10	90% (9)	90% (9)	3. Which is most important to a good job interview? a. willingness to work b. wearing expensive clothes c. bringing a friend d. telling how many different schools you went to
41	78% (32)	90% (37)	4. Which of the following will help in an interview? a. bringing your parent or guardian b. good eye contact c. telling the interviewer you are in foster care d. honestly telling that you were fired from previous jobs
0	--	--	5. Standard job applications typically do <u>not</u> require the following: a. employment history b. social security number c. W-2 Form d. educational history
31	97% (30)	97% (30)	6. A letter to follow up an interview should a. tell the employer what he/she did wrong in the interview. b. thank the employer for taking the time for the interview. c. make suggestions for changes the employer should make. d. tell the employer about your family.
44	100% (44)	100% (44)	7. One good way to prepare for a job interview is to a. stay up late the night before, studying for it. b. skip breakfast, so you don't have an upset stomach. c. practice doing a job interview, with an adult friend. d. get in the right mood, by partying the night before.
10	60% (6)	90% (9)	8. Why is it a very good idea for you to do volunteer work at a hospital, agency, or business? a. It helps you meet contacts and references for paying jobs. b. It will help you feel good about yourself. c. It gives you an advantage over others in applying for paying jobs. d. 'a' and 'b'. e. 'a', 'b', and 'c'.
25	72% (18)	76% (19)	9. The most important part of interpersonal communication is a. talking. b. looking. c. listening. d. doing. e. asking.

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered *correctly* Pre-test	Percent who answered *correctly* Post-test		
0	--	--	10.	If you don't know if another person understood something very important you told her or him, you should a. give up trying to tell them. b. tell them again. c. ask them please to repeat to you what you told them. d. ask them if they understood what you told them. e. assume that they probably did understand it.
0	--	--	11.	If you do <u>not</u> understand what a woman is trying to tell you, you should a. just forget the matter since it probably isn't important. b. tell her that she should improve her communication skills. c. ask her please to repeat what she told you, in a different way. d. ask her please to stop trying to tell you things you don't care to hear. e. tell her that you understand, because that's what she wants to hear.
0	--	--	12.	A baby should be slapped or spanked a. whenever he or she misbehaves. b. only when he or she misbehaves very badly. c. only if you are angry. d. only if you are not angry. e. at no time.
32	81% (26)	88% (28)	13.	If you are having trouble, or if something is bothering you, asking for help is a. a very good idea, and good for you to do. b. okay only if there is <u>no</u> way you can take care of it yourself. c. okay now and then, but not very often. d. a sign of weakness, but okay in an emergency. e. a very bad idea, since it is the opposite of independence.
9	33% (3)	44% (4)	14.	If you get many "crank" or harassing phone calls, one good strategy is for you to: a. try to help the callers by asking them please to be nicer. b. tell them you don't appreciate the way they are bothering you. c. tell them you are angry and upset about their phone calls to you. d. get an answering machine that lets you "screen" calls, and not talk with them. e. ask everyone you know if they know who might be harassing you that way.
10	80% (8)	80% (8)	15.	"You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar" means a. If you have a problem with flies in your house, honey makes a good flytrap but vinegar doesn't. b. It's an old baseball "trick" to coat your fielder's mitt with honey. The ball sticks to it. c. If there's something you want, you're more likely to get it by being nice than by being nasty. d. If you're sexually active, you're more likely to get a sexually transmitted disease. e. If you're nice, you probably will have more problems than if you're not nice.
42	48% (20)	62% (26)	16.	Your gross pay (or weekly salary) is the amount of money you get a. to spend that week for housing, food, clothes, car, etc. b. to put in the bank that week, before you may spend it that month. c. before deductions automatically are taken out for taxes, etc. d. before you start your work for the week.
10	10% (1)	40% (4)	17.	Even if you don't like a job very much, to establish a respectable work record it is a good idea to stay with that job for at least a. one month. b. six months. c. one year. d. five years.
0	--	--	18.	The best way to ask for a raise is to a. set an appointment with your supervisor and ask politely. b. write a letter to the owner of the company. c. remind your supervisor of how much you do, and demand a raise. d. call the Equal Opportunity Commission.

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test	Percent who answered correctly Post-test		
15	87% (10)	87% (13)	19.	Your supervisor tells you to sweep the floor. This is not in your job description, and no one told you that you would have to do this. You should a. call the supervisor's boss and tell him or her. b. report this to the abuse hotline. c. sweep the floor. d. call a lawyer.
0	--	--	20.	If you have been working at job for over six months and have not missed any days of work due to sickness, generally your employer will think you are a. a fool for not using any of your sick leave days. b. trying to trick them into thinking you are loyal. c. a healthy and dedicated worker. d. not aware of the fact that you can use sick leave.
20	60% (12)	75% (15)	21.	If you are late for work more than a few times a year, your boss probably will think you are a. a good worker who knows that other things than work also are important. b. a normal person, who has occasional problems just like everybody else. c. an average worker, who probably has had a little more bad luck than everybody else. d. a problem worker who doesn't take work as seriously as you should, and should be fired. e. a criminal who should be watched by the police.
35	40% (14)	51% (18)	22.	Generally, it is best if the fraction of your monthly income you use for rent and utilities is no more than a. one tenth. b. one sixth. c. one fifth. d. one half. e. two thirds.
9	78% (7)	89% (8)	23.	In a newspaper apartment rentals ad, "slpg rm" means a. sloping rowmodel. b. semi-independent living program room. c. sleeping room only. d. any of the above. e. none of the above.
34	91% (31)	100% (34)	24.	The behavior of your friends or guests at your apartment is a. <u>not</u> your responsibility, because you cannot control them. b. your responsibility, because it is your apartment. c. the caretakers' responsibility, because they are in charge. d. no concern of anyone's, because it is a private apartment. e. the responsibility of the police.
41	37% (15)	61% (25)	25.	A damage deposit is a. money you don't have to deposit in advance, but you get back if you don't harm your apartment. b. damage to an apartment a renter does to get back at an unfair landlord. c. $10 to $25 a renter must deposit with the landlord, as "insurance" against damage. d. hundreds of dollars a renter must deposit with the landlord as "insurance" against damage. e. money sometimes required, but seldom by landlords of inexpensive apartments.
26	96% (25)	100% (26)	26.	Suppose your friend who is visiting you at your apartment makes some long distance telephone calls on your phone. They show up on your telephone bill costing $75. Who legally has to pay? a. your friend, because they made the phone calls. b. the people your friend phoned, because it really was for them. c. the phone company, because you were not responsible. d. you, because it's your phone. e. no one, because it's a complicated mix-up.

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test	Percent who answered correctly Post-test		
25	44% (11)	76% (19)	27.	If you use newspaper or magazine coupons to save money on food, you should use them for a. items you would normally buy. b. items you otherwise might not get. c. expensive items. d. "a" and "b". e. "a", "b", and "c".
19	47% (9)	68% (13)	28.	Never go grocery shopping when you are a. full, because you probably will buy less than what's on your list. b. hungry, because you probably will buy more than what's on your list. c. almost full, because you probably forget something on your list. d. a little hungry, because you probably will eat any free samples offered. e. "a" or "b".
24	42% (10)	63% (15)	29.	A posted "unit price" (for example, price per oz.) helps you compare the value of one grocery item with a. consumer reports. b. a similar item (different brand or size) sold in a different store. c. a similar item (different brand or size) sold in the same store. d. "b" and "c". e. none of the above.
34	91% (31)	97% (33)	30.	How should you put out a grease fire (such as a fire in a frying pan or on the stove burner)? a. with water b. blow it out c. put ice cubes on it d. pour salt or flour on it e. cover it with newspaper
0	--	--	31.	If you have had raw hamburger, raw chicken, or other raw meat on a plate for shaping or cutting it, you <u>never</u> should eat from that plate or with that knife before washing it well. This is because it a. isn't polite. b. will taste bad. c. can give you bad food poisoning. d. is a superstition. e. will remind you to wash your dishes at other times, when it is important.
0	--	--	32.	If the tag on a sweater says "dry clean only", that means a. dry clean only if you don't have a washing machine. b. dry clean only once. c. do <u>not</u> wash it in a washing machine. Bring it to a dry cleaner. d. do <u>not</u> dry clean it. The manufacturer takes no responsibility if you do.
34	35% (12)	53% (18)	33.	If you own, or plan to own a used car, about how much should you budget each year for repairs and maintenance (if you do <u>not</u> do repairs yourself). a. $50 b. $100 c. $300 d. $600 e. $900
15	73% (11)	80% (12)	34.	If there are a lot of bugs in your apartment, one thing that might help is to a. clean your kitchen very well, and keep it very clean. b. put a dish of food for them in an out-of-the-way place, like a closet. c. buy an ultrasonic sound generator which is advertised to drive bugs away. d. keep your windows open a crack, so the bugs can leave the apartment. e. ignore them.

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test	Percent who answered correctly Post-test		
34	85% (29)	71% (24)	35.	If there is <u>not</u> a smoke detector in your apartment or house, you should a. be thankful; they go off whenever you burn something while cooking. b. not worry; who ever heard of them doing any good? c. either have your caretaker install one, or get one yourself (they're cheap). d. forget about it; it's not your responsibility. e. complain to the Department of Public Safety.
10	60% (6)	60% (6)	36.	One way to keep yourself from being talked into buying something you don't really need by a smooth salesperson is to a. go shopping with a friend who will help you watch out for overspending. b. buy if possible from a salesperson who will come into your apartment. c. shop at more expensive stores, where the salespeople are not so persistent. d. go shopping when you are depressed, so you are not as likely to buy something. e. shop at less expensive stores, where the salespeople are not so persistent.
0	--	--	37.	If you get nice-looking clothes cheap at a used clothing store, most people would think you are a. a bum or homeless person. b. poor, and trying to fool people. c. a welfare cheat. d. smart, if they know that's how you got the clothes. e. a wealthy person, since people are fooled easily.
25	84% (21)	88% (22)	38.	When you buy something expensive, what should you do with the receipt? a. throw it away with the wrapping, bag, or package b. throw it away immediately, for security c. give it back to the cashier to throw away d. save it for five days, until you're sure the item is okay e. save it for at least one year, in case the item is defective
0	--	--	39.	When you buy a new appliance or electronics item (stereo, radio, etc.) the salesperson often will try to sell you also a "service contract" for the item. Such "service contracts" <u>usually</u> are a. a good deal, and you should buy them. b. a fair deal, and you should buy them just for expensive purchases. c. neither a good nor a bad deal, but a matter of luck. d. a bad deal, and you should not buy them. e. illegal, and you should report them to the police.
10	70% (7)	80% (8)	40.	If you are arrested, your first telephone call should be to a. 911, for help in this emergency. b. a person you can trust to find a lawyer. c. a bail bondsman to get you out jail immediately. d. the judge, to plead innocence and ask to be released.
0	--	--	41.	You are using a city map to find Main Street. The map index shows the following: Main Street, D-9. "D-9" means that a. Main Street is near highway D-9. b. the zip code for Main Street is D-9. c. Main Street is on the grid D-9. d. D-9 is the state number for Main Street.
15	0% (0)	13% (2)	42.	If you happen to be in the Twin Cities area and need any kind of assistance or service, but don't know where to find it, a good place to start is by calling a. 911. b. "First Call for Help". c. The Attorney General's Office. d. "Information" (411).
16	94% (15)	94% (15)	43.	If you need to call 911 from a pay phone, but don't have a quarter, what should you do? a. wait for the person who passes by, and ask for a quarter. b. run around to try to find someone who has a quarter. c. run to the nearest store or business and ask for a quarter. d. call 911 from the pay phone; you don't need a quarter to call 911. e. forget about it; if it was an emergency it's already too late.

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test	Percent who answered correctly Post-test		
0	--	--	44.	You should go to a dentist a. every six months, for a professional cleaning and check-up. b. once a year, for a professional cleaning and check-up. c. about once every five years, for a professional cleaning and check-up. d. only if you have a bad toothache, in order to save your money for other needs.
34	88% (30)	91% (31)	45.	If you cut your arm or leg and are bleeding a lot, you should a. apply band aids. b. run the wound under cold water. c. nothing. d. apply direct pressure over the wound.
34	59% (20)	68% (23)	46.	Life insurance rates are much more expensive for people who smoke. This is because a. there is a government surcharge on smokers' insurance. b. overall, smokers die at younger ages than nonsmokers. c. insurance companies want to discriminate against smokers. d. smokers make more money than nonsmokers.
25	48% (12)	84% (21)	47.	Medical research has proven which of the following? a. You can't get pregnant the first time you do it. b. Laughing is good for your health. c. Colds most often are caught by other people sneezing near you. d. Cancer is contagious (you can catch it from someone who has it). e. Eating chocolate is a common cause of acne.
10	70% (7)	80% (8)	48.	The reason we are told to wash our hands before eating, and also at other times, is that a. it's a meaningless type of behavior that people just haven't given up. b. people naturally just like to tell other people, particularly children, what to do. c. people commonly get sick as a result of disease germs on their own unwashed hands. d. people are disgusted at the sight of dirt on other people's hands at the dinner table. e. the businesses that make soap have persuaded people to do that, by their ads.
0	--	--	49.	If you don't eat properly (get enough green vegetables, fruit, protein, calcium, etc.) what is <u>not</u> a problem you are likely to have? a. feeling tired a lot b. getting colds and diseases more than other people c. feeling you need to eat candy bars and drink sweet drinks d. feeling you need to smoke cigarettes or drink coffee or cola e. having other people always offering to cook for you the good food you need
41	85% (35)	93% (38)	50.	Which of the following is <u>not</u> one of the three known ways to get AIDS? a. contact with a used infected hypodermic needle b. contact with infected blood c. contact with infected semen or vaginal fluid d. skin contact with (touching) an infected person
44	89% (39)	89% (39)	51.	Who has the right to decide how and when anyone touches you? a. your parents (or foster parents) b. your boyfriend or girlfriend (or spouse) c. your county social worker d. your priest, minister, or other religious leader e. only you
19	84% (16)	84% (16)	52.	If you are sexually abused or raped, whose fault is it? a. partly the abuser's fault, and partly your fault b. all your own fault c. all the abuser's fault d. the police's fault, for not having protected you e. everybody's fault

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test	Percent who answered correctly Post-test		
51	67% (34)	84% (43)	53.	Which of the following method(s) of birth control may be considered 100% effective? a. condoms b. the rhythm method c. diaphragm d. abstinence e. "a" and "d"
19	74% (14)	89% (17)	54.	When is it okay to hit (or slap) the person with whom you are involved? a. It is okay as long as they don't tell you they object. b. It is okay as long as they are able to defend themselves. c. It is okay only if telling them to stop something didn't work. d. It is okay only if they have done something very wrong or hurtful to you. e. It is never okay to hit (or slap) the person with whom you are involved.
19	89% (17)	89% (17)	55.	In a dating or sexual relationship, what does "No" (or "Stop") mean? a. "No" (or "Stop"). b. probably no (or stop), but keep trying c. maybe d. it depends on who is saying it; you be the judge e. yes
36	89% (32)	97% (35)	56.	One way to tell if a person is safe to date and get close to is whether they a. tell you they are "disease free". b. tell you they love you enough to have sex with you. c. are very good looking and other people also want to be with them. d. accept and respect the limits you place on the relationship. e. are popular.
10	90% (9)	100% (10)	57.	You give a store clerk a five dollar bill and a dime for an item that costs $3.10. How much should you get back? a. $1.10 b. $2.00 c. $2.10 d. $2.90
0	--	--	58.	Which would have the highest interest rate for a loan? a. a bank b. a credit union c. a savings and loan d. a finance company
0	--	--	59.	If you spend $2 a week on Minnesota State Lottery tickets, chances are very good that each year you will a. gain about $10, overall. b. about break even, overall. c. lose about $50, overall. d. lose about $100, overall.
10	40% (4)	80% (8)	60.	For a holiday or other special present, most people close to you would like it best if you gave them a gift that a. is very expensive. b. is somewhat expensive. c. is cheap. d. you made for them yourself.
10	60% (6)	60% (6)	61.	When choosing a bank, it is <u>not</u> important to consider if a. the location is convenient. b. the hours are convenient. c. they pay interest at a competitive rate. d. they offer a premium (such as a toaster) to new customers. e. they have a required minimum balance that is reasonable for you.
10	20% (2)	40% (4)	62.	Income tax returns must be filed by a. everyone between ages 21 and 65. b. everyone who owns property. c. everyone with income over a certain amount in that year. d. everyone who is employed at all during that year. e. everyone.

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# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test	Percent who answered correctly Post-test		
36	58% (21)	69% (25)	63.	If you write checks for more money than you have in your bank checking account, what might happen? a. The bank will charge you $15 or more for each "bad check" you wrote. b. The bank will refuse to pay the checks. c. The bank might close your account. d. You might not be able to open another checking account anywhere in the United States for a year. e. All of the above.
0	--	--	64.	If you hang out with trouble makers, which of the following is <u>not</u> likely to happen? a. You will get in trouble. b. You will be blamed for things they do. c. They will learn to be good from your good example. d. They will discourage you from improving yourself. e. They will cause you to waste your time.
10	70% (7)	90% (9)	65.	Setting personal goals for yourself can help you make your life better. You should choose your personal goals so that they a. are what you would expect to reach if you did <u>not</u> set them. b. are very easy for you to reach. c. make you try harder, but you can then reach them. d. are very difficult for you to reach. e. are impossible for you to reach.
7	86% (6)	100% (7)	66.	When filling out a job application it is <u>not</u> important that you a. print or type neatly. b. use a red flair pen. c. check with your references ahead of time. d. know your social security number.
7	71% (5)	100% (7)	67.	A question which an interviewer might ask is a. why don't you tell me about yourself? b. what are your major strengths? c. what are your major weaknesses? d. none of the above. e. all of the above.
7	71% (5)	100% (7)	68.	If you are asked during a job interview "what your weaknesses are," it is a good idea to a. tell the interviewer that you are sometimes late. b. refuse to answer the question. c. turn your answer into a positive statement such as, "I tend to work too hard." d. ask the interviewer about his/her weaknesses. e. "a" and "d."
7	71% (5)	100% (7)	69.	When contemplating a career choice, it is a good idea to consider which of the following? a. Do you like to be indoors or outside? b. Do you like to be alone or with others? c. Do you enjoy competitive or non-competitive activities? d. All of the above. e. None of the above.
7	100% (7)	100% (7)	70.	Which of the following would be an important question to ask when looking for an apartment? a. Are there laundry facilities? b. Are utilities included? c. How much is the damage deposit? d. How long is the lease? e. All of the above.
7	86% (6)	100% (7)	71.	Before you move into an apartment it is a good idea to a. go through the apartment, record all damage, and give a copy to the landlord. b. call the gas company and find out the average monthly cost of heating bills. c. bring a load of laundry to the building and do it to see if the laundry facilities are adequate. d. "a" and "b". e. "a" and "c".

# of Youths who were tested on item	Percent who answered correctly Pre-test	Percent who answered correctly Post-test		
7	100% (7)	86% (6)	72.	All apartments are required to allow the following: a. pets. b. waterbeds. c. parties, even if they are very loud. d. none of the above. e. "a" and "b".
7	100% (7)	100% (7)	73.	In Minnesota a landlord can get a court order to evict you if a. you have not paid rent. b. he/she does not like the race of your friends. c. you have broken terms of your lease. d. "a" and "b". e. "a" and "c".
7	86% (6)	100% (7)	74.	Rent would be an example of a a. flexible expense. b. unexpected expense. c. fixed expense. d. gross earning.
7	100% (7)	86% (6)	75.	Which of the following can be found in the US West Phone Directory? a. Zip codes for all areas in the State. b. Area codes for the whole United States. c. Instructions for long distance calling. d. Maps of the area. e. All of the above.
7	14% (1)	29% (2)	76.	Infatuation is a. instant desire. b. marked by a feeling of insecurity. c. a mature acceptance of imperfection. d. "a" and "b". e. "a" and "c".
7	100% (7)	86% (6)	77.	A healthy family a. does not seek help when it gets into trouble. b. works hard to communicate. c. teaches respect for others. d. "a" and "b". e. "b" and "c".

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Self-esteem Gains

Background

It is the belief of the SELF Program that self-esteem is a critical issue for youth who have been in foster care. Building or increasing youth self-esteem is an ongoing priority for SELF-funded independent living skills groups.

Leaders of independent living skills groups funded by the SELF Program in 1992 were asked to have their participants complete the Janis-Field Feelings of Inadequacy Scale. Participants complete the scale at the beginning of group training, and again at the end of the group training as a measure of self-esteem gain.

The Janis-Field is a widely respected measure of self-esteem. According to a report from the Center for Youth Development and Research at the University of Minnesota (Conrad and Hedin, 1981), the Janis-Field has been shown to have good reliability and validity. It also is resistant to falsification.

The version of the Janis-Field used with these youth was the version presented by Conrad and Hedin in the report mentioned above. It consists of the ten items having the highest inter-item correlation from the original 20-item form. These items also are particularly appropriate for use with high-school age youth. This ten-item form of the Janis-Field Scale is reproduced in the Appendix.

Results

At the time of this report, completed Janis-Field forms or scores, pre- and post-intervention, were submitted for 48 youth from five different independent living skills groups conducted at various locations in Minnesota.

As a set of ten scale items, each of which is a five-point rating scale, this Janis-Field form has a structural total score range of 0-50, with a mean of 30.

The average total score of these 1992 SELF-group participants on the Janis-Field pre-test was 29.46, or slightly below the structural mean. Their average score on the post-test was 31.16, above the structural mean. This shows an average increase for the youth, after the group experience, of nearly two scale points on the short measure of self-esteem. According to a paired samples t-test, this measured increase in self-esteem is highly significant statistically, with a probability of occurring by chance less than .005.

The results of this measure of self-esteem gain should not be over-interpreted. However, they contribute to a broader picture of SELF-Program youth self-esteem gain reflected by the separate measures of youth self-report and interview narrative reports of county program administrators from around the state.

One-year Follow-up of 1991 Clients' Public Assistance Status

Sample II consists of 315 youth (approximately 30% of the total) served by the SELF Program in any way during FFY1991. The Public Assistance status of these youth was checked at three-month intervals for FFY1992, the year following their service.

Public Assistance status, or financial dependence on the government for the basic necessities of life, commonly is considered to be an undesirable outcome of social service programs. This is particularly true for programs intended to prepare clients for independent living. For these reasons and others, client Public Assistance status 90 days after completion of Title IV-E-IL services is a primary outcome measure required from the states by the federal office of Title IV-E-IL programs.

The reasoning behind the use of such measures is good and commendable. Nevertheless, some limitations on the meaning and utility of Public Assistance status as an outcome measure need to be emphasized.

For many youth served by the Title IV-E-IL SELF Program in Minnesota, SELF-funded service is completed much more than 90 days before the youth is scheduled to leave foster care. One common situation is for youths to attend a SELF-funded independent living skills group during the summer before their senior year of high school. They turn 18 during their senior year but continue in foster care until their high school graduation. Such youth generally are eligible for, and proper recipients of, public

medical assistance. For this reason, medical assistance status is excluded in some of the following analyses.

For many other youth, social service agencies consider it to be in the best interest of the young person, and of society, for the youth to be given some form of public assistance while continuing to develop improved skills for self-sufficiency.

With the above qualifications, it is helpful to know the extent to which youth served through Title IV-E-IL funds continue to need Public Assistance. The longer-term the follow-up, the more meaningful and valuable is the knowledge gained.

This one-year follow-up study was conducted by means of Minnesota's new centralized computer system for Public Assistance, titled "MAXIS." The computer data search was conducted one case at a time, which was necessary to have the highest possible degree of data accuracy at this time. From the state computer record, client Public Assistance status was checked and recorded for the following quarterly dates: December 21, 1991; March 21, 1992; June 21, 1992; and September 21, 1992. For each client, for each of those dates, the information was recorded about whether they were recipients of General Assistance (GA), Medical Assistance (MA), Food Stamps (FS), and/or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The sample demographics and follow-up results are presented on the following pages.

CLIENT RACE/ETHNICITY BY GENDER, SAMPLE II TABLE 5

(data available for 261 youth on both measures)

	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq..	(%)
AFRICAN AMERICAN	4	3%	11	8%	15	6%
AMERICAN INDIAN	9	7%	3	2%	12	5%
ASIAN AMERICAN	21	17%	7	5%	28	11%
HISPANIC	2	2%	2	1%	4	2%
WHITE	80	66%	112	80%	192	73%
OTHER/MIXED	5	4%	5	4%	10	4%
	121	100%	140	100%	261	100%

Table 5 shows that Sample II reflects extremely closely the race group proportions of the population of youth served by the SELF Program in 1991. All race group proportions of the sample are within 2% of the proportions in the population of youth served.

While more females than males were served by the SELF Program in 1991, there were more males than females in the follow-up sample. Such variations in proportions are expectable due to chance in the sampling process.

CLIENT AGE BY GENDER, SAMPLE II TABLE 6
(data available for 258 youth on both measures)

	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
16 years old	11	9%	18	13%	29	11%
17 years old	49	41%	59	43%	108	42%
18 years old	38	32%	49	36%	87	34%
19 years old	15	13%	8	6%	23	9%
20 years old	5	4%	3	2%	8	3%
21 years old	2	2%	1	1%	3	1%
	120	100%	138	100%	258	100%

Age in years is calculated as of September 1, 1991 for Table 6. In other words, on the last quarterly date for which client follow-up Public Assistance status was checked, each youth in the sample was one year older than in the distribution shown. 21-year-old youth are over the age of eligibility for SELF-funded service. The 21-year-olds in the table above were under 21 years old at the time in 1991 when they were served.

The age distribution of youth in this one-year follow-up sample reflects very closely the age distribution of all clients served by the SELF Program in 1991. For each age, the proportion in the sample is within two percentage points of the proportion for that age among all clients served that year.

Overall, 215 of the 315 youth, or 68%, were <u>not</u> receiving General Assistance, AFDC, or Food Stamp public assistance on

any of the four quarterly dates checked. 165 of the 315 youth, or 52%, were not receiving any of the forms of public assistance just listed, and neither were they receiving Medical Assistance on any of the four quarterly dates checked.

QUARTERLY
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STATUS, SAMPLE II
(data available for 315 youth on all measures)

TABLE 7

	Percent of Sample Receiving Public Assistance			
Date:	12/21/91	3/21/92	6/21/92	9/21/92
General Assistance	5%	6%	6%	5%
AFDC	10%	10%	10%	9%
Food Stamps	16%	17%	17%	18%
Medical Assistance	31%	35%	38%	35%

Table 7 reflects information found elsewhere in this report, that most youth served by the SELF Program in a given year still are in foster care during the year following their service by the program. The relatively high percent of youth receiving Medical Assistance particularly indicates this. While the fact that ten percent of the youth were receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) is a cause for concern, actually it is a somewhat positive finding. Between seven and nine percent of all 19 to 21-year-olds in Minnesota received AFDC in 1990. Since youth in out-of-home placement are known to be at high risk for

teen parenthood (among other social concerns), the fact that the AFDC rate for these SELF Program clients is only slightly elevated is better than might be expected.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY GENDER — TABLE 8
SAMPLE II
(data available for 304 youth on both measures)

Number and Percent of Sample Group
Receiving GA, AFDC, or Food Stamps
on Any of the Four Quarterly Dates Checked

SEX	Number	Percent
FEMALE	37	27% (of females in the sample)
MALE	63	38% (of males in the sample)
TOTAL	100	33% (of the total sample)

Table 8 indicates that males served with SELF funds are somewhat more likely than females to be recipients of Public Assistance during the year following service. This difference is large enough so that it is unlikely to be attributable to chance in sampling. However, it is not proven large enough to have implications for services.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY AGE — TABLE 9

SAMPLE II (data available for 260 youth on both measures)

Number and Percent of Sample Group
Receiving GA, AFDC, or Food Stamps
on Any of the Four Quarterly Dates Checked

AGE (on 9/1/91)	Number	Percent
Sixteen years old	8	28% (of 16-year-olds in the sample)
Seventeen years old	45	42% (of 17-year-olds in the sample)
Eighteen years old	33	38% (of 18-year-olds in the sample)
Nineteen years old	8	33% (of 19-year-olds in the sample)
Twenty years old	1	13% (of 20-year-olds in the sample)
Twenty-one years old	0	0% (of 21-year-olds in the sample)
TOTAL	95	37% (of the total sample)

First, it should be noted that as of the last quarterly date checked--September 21, 1992--the young people in each age group were one year older than is listed. Although there were only eight youth in the sample of twenty-year-olds, and three youth in the sample of twenty-one-year-olds, the preliminary indication is quite strong that the older youth served are less likely than the younger youth to receive Public Assistance during the year following SELF-funded service. If longer term follow-up of this sample, and/or a larger sample, confirms this preliminary indication, it would appear to be an excellent overall outcome of the Title-IV-E-IL Program in Minnesota.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY — TABLE 10

SAMPLE II (data available for 262 youth on both measures)

Number and Percent of Sample Group
Receiving GA, AFDC, or Food Stamps
on Any of the Four Quarterly Dates Checked

RACE	Number	Percent
African American	7	47% (of African Americans in the sample)
American Indian	8	67% (of American Indians in the sample)
Asian American	4	14% (of Asian Americans in the sample)
Hispanic American	1	25% (of Hispanic Americans in the sample)
White	71	37% (of white Americans in the sample)
Other/Mixed	6	60% (of other/mixed Americans in sample)
TOTAL	97	37% (of the total sample)

This table shows preliminary indications that American Indian, Mixed Race, and African American youth served by the SELF Program are more likely than white youth, Asian American youth, or Hispanic American youth to be recipients of Public Assistance during the year after their SELF-funded service. Although this might not be surprising in the context of general Public Assistance statistics, no conclusions should be drawn based solely on the data from this sample. The numbers of youth of color in this sample, while they reflect the proportions in the population of youth served, are not large enough to be reliable statistically. Future research should aim for a larger sample or oversampling of the populations of youth of color served by the SELF Program.

Follow-up of 1992 Clients Completing SELF-funded Service

As described earlier, Sample III consists of 196 youth served during FFY1992 who, according to their local SELF Program coordinator, probably will receive no further service from the SELF Program. These youth completed survey forms rating the quality of service they received from the SELF Program. The survey also includes basic indicators of independent living status, e.g., housing situation, educational status, employment status, and public assistance status. These youth also are being surveyed 90 days later and one year later. Thus far, surveys have been received from 196 youth. This appears to be more than 50% of all youth who have completed SELF-funded service. There is, however, no practical method now to determine certainty of service completion. Currently, there appears to be an unusually high follow-up contact rate for this population, which is highly mobile and difficult to track.

This third sample of youth is most appropriate for long-term follow-up and assessment of client outcomes. For Sample III clients, independent living is most likely to be an immediate goal.

The following information is based on Sample III youth. At the time of this report, survey forms had been received from 196 clients. These survey forms were filled out by youth at about the time of completion of service. Three months after receipt of the first survey, the youth were asked to complete an identical 90-day follow-up survey. At the time of this report, 90-day follow-up

surveys had been received from 94 clients. The smaller number of 90-day follow-up surveys mainly is due to the timing of this report. Surveys are being distributed and are being received on an ongoing basis.

The two counties that contain the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis started much later than the other counties distributing surveys to their SELF Program "completers." Because most youth of color reside in those counties, this first year's report on Sample III youth includes little information on youth of color and other youth from the major metropolitan area.

CLIENT RATINGS
OF QUALITY OF SERVICE, SAMPLE III

TABLE 11

Rating	Frequency	Percent of Clients
EXCELLENT	103	55.7%
VERY GOOD	56	30.3%
OKAY	21	11.4%
FAIR	1	0.5%
POOR	4	2.2%
NO RESPONSE	11	----
	---	-----
	196	100%

These ratings indicate a very high level of client satisfaction with SELF Program service received. Written comments from clients mostly are glowing endorsements of the program and strong expressions of gratitude. Comments from a few clients reflect an

intense need or desire for substantially more help. Complete transcriptions of client comments are included in the Appendix.

CLIENT AGE BY GENDER, SAMPLE III — TABLE 12

	SURVEY #1 RECEIVED (at completion of service)				SURVEY #2 RECEIVED (90-day follow-up)			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
16 years old	17	14%	7	10%	11	17%	2	6%
17 years old	43	35%	27	39%	26	41%	12	39%
18 years old	36	29%	15	22%	12	19%	6	19%
19 years old	21	17%	8	12%	9	14%	3	10%
20 years old	6	5%	12	17%	5	8%	8	26%
	123	100%	69	100%	63	100%	31	100%

The age distribution of youth who completed and returned surveys, as shown in Table 12, closely reflects the general age distribution of clients served. The biggest difference is the relatively larger proportion of youth age 20. This is to be expected for a group judged to have completed all SELF-funded service. About twice as many females as males have completed and returned follow-up surveys thus far. Although more females than males are served by the SELF Program statewide, the difference is not that large. It might reflect greater compliance among female clients served.

RACE/ETHNICITY, SAMPLE III — TABLE 13

	SURVEY #1 RECEIVED (at completion of service)		SURVEY #2 RECEIVED (90-day follow-up)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
AFRICAN AMERICAN	4	2.1%	1	1.1%
AMERICAN INDIAN	15	7.7%	5	5.3%
ASIAN	18	9.2%	8	8.5%
HISPANIC	4	2.1%	2	2.1%
WHITE	153	78.5%	77	81.9%
OTHER	1	.5%	1	1.1%
NO RESPONSE	1	---	--	---
Total	196	100.0%	94	100.0%

As mentioned before, the two counties containing the largest metropolitan area in Minnesota distributed their survey forms late in the year. The forms received as of this time, therefore, should be considered a very good representation of youth from rural, or "outstate" Minnesota, but not representative of the Twin Cities area. African-American youth, the majority of whom reside in the Twin Cities area, thus are not represented proportionately in Table 13.

CURRENT WORK STATUS, SAMPLE III — TABLE 14

	TIME 1 (n=94) (at completion of service)		TIME 2 (n=94) (at 90-day follow-up)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
STUDENT	41	43.6%	41	43.6%
EMPLOYED PART TIME	35	37.2%	34	36.2%
UNEMPLOYED, LOOKING	8	8.5%	9	9.6%
EMPLOYED FULL TIME	7	7.4%	6	6.4%
HOMEMAKER	1	1.1%	2	2.1%
UNEMPLOYED, NOT LOOKING	2	2.1%	1	1.1%
OTHER	--	---	1	1.1%
Total	94	100.0%	94	100.0%

Table 14 shows that a large proportion of youth who have completed SELF-funded service are enrolled in educational programs. This should be considered positive. This population is at high risk for dropping out of school. It is the prevailing view in social services that high school graduation and post-secondary training are related to eventual economic success. That so many of the youth still are in school also shows the importance of long-term follow-up of the youth. Until they have completed their education, we are unlikely to obtain a meaningful measure of their eventual economic independence

CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT — TABLE 15
SAMPLE III

	TIME 1 (n=94) (at completion of service)		TIME 2 (n=94) (at 90-day follow-up)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
FOSTER HOME	40	43.0%	27	28.7%
WITH BIRTH PARENTS	23	24.7%	24	25.5%
INDEPENDENT	15	16.0%	27	28.7%
"OTHER"	7	7.4%	6	6.4%
GROUP HOME	5	5.4%	4	4.3%
WITH RELATIVES	2	2.2%	6	6.4%
EMERGENCY SHELTER	1	1.1%	--	---
NO RESPONSE	1	1.1%	--	---
	---	------	---	------
	94	100.0%	94	100.0%

Table 15 shows that 90 days after youth have completed SELF-funded service, many of them still are residing at their foster home or living with their birth parents. Living with birth parents is not necessarily a negative outcome. In many cases great effort has been made to reconcile the youth with their parents. A significant number (an increase of almost 13%) are living independently at the time of 90 day follow-up. Related to the information on work status, these data also support the importance of longer-range client follow-up.

EDUCATION STATUS, SAMPLE III — TABLE 16

	TIME 1 (n=94) (at completion of service)		TIME 2 (n=94) (at 90-day follow-up)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
IN REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL	48	51.1%	44	46.8%
IN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL	18	19.1%	15	16.0%
GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL	11	11.7%	11	11.7%
IN COLLEGE	6	6.4%	12	12.8%
WORKING ON GED	3	3.2%	3	3.2%
IN VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL PROGRAM	3	3.2%	4	4.3%
COMPLETED GED	2	2.1%	1	1.1%
DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL	1	1.1%	3	3.2%
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM	--	-----	1	1.1%
OTHER	1	1.1%	--	---
	94	100.0%	94	100.0%

Table 16 shows that youth who have completed SELF-funded service are, in large numbers, still in high school. As discussed earlier, this should be considered positive because of the economic importance to a person of high school graduation. These data also reflect the practice of many counties of discontinuing services to youth when they reach age eighteen and the primary legal responsibilities of the counties end.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STATUS
SAMPLE III

TABLE 17

	TIME 1 (n=94) (at completion of service)		TIME 2 (n=94) (at 90-day follow-up)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	51	54.3%	50	53.2%
FOOD STAMPS	10	10.6%	11	11.7%
OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	9	9.6%	5	5.3%
AFDC	8	8.5%	10	10.6%
GENERAL ASSISTANCE	3	3.2%	4	4.3%
NO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AT ALL	32	34.0%	34	36.2%

Consistent with information reported earlier, Table 17 shows that the majority of youth who have completed SELF-funded service have not yet left public care after 90 days. Youth eligibility for medical assistance tends to be associated with foster care status and young age. These data further confirm the conclusion that 90-day follow-up status is too short a time-frame for judgement of outcomes for Title IV-E-IL SELF-Program served youth in Minnesota. The one-year follow-up of youth served in 1991 show the majority of youth not receiving public assistance after one year.

Interviews with SELF Program County Coordinators

Immediate knowledge of the impact of the SELF Program, including its strengths, limitations, and results, is perhaps most concentrated in the SELF coordinators--key staff responsible for the program at each of the county agencies that participate in the SELF Program in Minnesota. These individuals generally have worked for many years providing direct service to SELF-eligible clients, and/or supervising county workers who provide services funded by SELF.

It is they who are responsible for carrying out procedures required by the central DHS Self Program. They are the ones who request funding from the State for service to clients. They monitor such service to clients and report county activities to the state office. They are familiar with clients' backgrounds, homes, and communities. They know many clients well. Often they see the successes or problems of clients in the years following service episodes. Sometimes the SELF Coordinators have assumed virtually parental responsibility for youth who are served through SELF.

Interviews with SELF coordinators were done by the SELF Program Evaluation Coordinator at twenty counties (nearly one-fourth of participating counties) throughout Minnesota. The interviews were between one and two hours in length. All were tape recorded with the permission of those interviewed. Edited transcripts of those interviews were given to those interviewed for

their approval. All staff names (except DHS SELF Program staff) and client names were changed, and many inconsequential client and county details were altered to protect anonymity. Changes were made with a constant concern to preserve the meaning of the knowledge obtained.

All of the transcripts were approved by those interviewed. In a few cases, there were some further edits for grammatical preference or more protection of confidentiality. The resulting compendium of transcripts, over 200 pages in length, is available on a limited basis as a separate Appendix Volume to this report.

The interviews were open-ended in an attempt to gather the SELF coordinators' breadth and depth of perceptions of the program and its contexts. The interviews also included all or several of the following 13 questions:

1. *Please tell me in your own words what the SELF Program is.*
2. *How long have you been involved personally with the Self Program?*
3. *What is your training and professional background?*
4. *How does the SELF Program work in your county?*
5. *How do you decide which youth, out of all of the eligible youth, will receive SELF-funded service?*
6. *How do you decide what service(s) to provide to each youth?*
7. *What do you think are the strengths of the SELF Program?*
8. *What do you think are the weaknesses of the SELF Program?*

9. *What do you think are the results of the SELF Program?*

10. *Purely theoretically, if the money made available to your SELF Program were doubled, how would it change what you do?*

11. *Purely theoretically, if the money made available to your SELF Program were reduced by half, how would it change what you do?*

12. *Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the SELF Program?*

13. *Could you please tell me about some of the clients who have been served by the SELF Program in your county?*

The answers of the SELF Coordinators to these questions, and their other comments and views, all of which were encouraged, are summarized on the following pages. The actual interview question heads each summary of responses to it.

Summary of such extensive, broad ranging, and often detailed comments is subjective. It reflects the editing and selective judgements of the reporter. Readers who will benefit from more complete interview information may request the volume of edited transcripts.

1. Please tell me in your own words what the SELF Program is.

The intent of this question (or request) was to find out if county SELF Program coordinators have different understandings of the program. This was found not to be the case. Responses to this request generally consisted of very accurate and concise descriptions of Title IV-E-IL and SELF Program policy, procedures, and intents. The following reply was representative:

> *It stands for Support for Emancipation [and] Living Functionally. It's geared toward getting children who are in out-of-home placement more ready for independent living. To receive SELF funds, adolescents have to be 16-21, in other words, they can be served even after they have left placement if a need is determined. . . I think that the program probably was developed because it was found that a lot of the kids in the past who had been in foster care, particularly long-term foster care, were not ready to live independently. It was just like all of the sudden they were 18, and no work had been done with them to get them ready for whatever their future plans were--whether for college, or just social skills. . . . I think it's really a good program. It helps a social worker be more apt to look at this issue of kids 16 and over. It gives you an incentive, too, to work with the kids . . . and makes you take a harder look at what they're going to do when they're done with out-of-home placement.*

Another reply addressed three different perspectives of the program:

> *I think the SELF Program, nationally, is a legislative awareness of almost catastrophic proportion needs of kids in foster care. . . . On the state level, I think it's been like a patchwork quilt. Some of the counties are making more beautiful patches than others . . . For some of the kids in this county, it's been like a drinking fountain. They've been able to come back to it and drink, and then go back out to their own deserts.*

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2. *How long have you been involved personally with the SELF Program?*

This question was asked to help center the interview on the perspective of the person interviewed. It also was asked to make a context for coordinators' comments in terms of their length of experience with the program. Most of the county SELF Program coordinators answered that their length of involvement with the program was two to five years. This indicates some stability in county-level staffing of SELF Program administration. It also shows that the perceptions of those interviewed about the SELF program generally are based on thorough familiarity with the program, its procedures, and its impact on youth and their own county social service system.

3. What is your training and professional background?

This question was asked to find out more about the types of persons who are directing or administering the SELF Program at the county level. Most respondents said that they have a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Sociology, Psychology, or Criminal Justice. A few said they have Master's Degrees in Social Work. Several of those interviewed related that they have worked as social workers and later social work supervisors for ten to twenty years.

4. How does the SELF Program work in your county?

This question was asked in order to learn how much variety there is in the operation of the SELF Program at the county level. It also was asked to make available to interested readers of this report a range of possibilities and alternatives for conducting such a program. Responses indicated many substantive differences in the way the SELF Program works in different counties.

Some of the respondents indicated that they delegate nearly all responsibility for the SELF Program in their county to the SELF-sponsored private grantee agency in their region. One clear benefit of this approach is to the youth in those counties. Those who are linked with a grantee agency are provided with a group independent living skills training experience which is beyond the means of a small county alone to provide. This benefit was anticipated. It was a rationale for the initial development of the regional agency programs. Several comments of SELF coordinators indicate that the regional programs are serving their purpose.

5. *How do you decide which youth, out of all of the eligible youth, will receive SELF-funded service? and*

6. *How do you decide what service(s) to provide to each youth?*

These questions are considered together because the responses of those interviewed to the questions tended to overlap. The questions were asked because of prior knowledge that demand for SELF funds often greatly exceeds the supply at the county level of service. The questions were asked to find out what different methods exist in Minnesota counties for prioritizing youth needs and the spending of SELF funds for individual clients.

Those interviewed responded that they concentrate SELF-funded service almost exclusively on youth who currently are under public care as open cases with their county social service system. The SELF coordinators reported that neither they nor the other workers at their agency have the time available to attempt to locate youth in their counties who are eligible for SELF-funded services but not already on a worker's caseload. One administrator said, "Our caseloads have gone up about 30% just in the last two or three years. We haven't gotten additional staff, and we're overworked."

In some counties, the SELF coordinator has her or his staff submit requests to the coordinator, who then makes the decisions on a case-by-case basis whether to fund the request for goods or services in whole, in part, or not at all. In some other counties, all such decisions are made by a team of workers who are responsible

for the SELF-eligible clients.

Most SELF Program coordinators said that it is very rare that any clients whose workers request SELF-funded goods or services are denied funding entirely. More commonly, each of the clients is given service at some basic level. That basic service may be independent living skills group training, or about $200 for basic furnishings and supplies to set up initially for independent living in an apartment.

Several of the coordinators said that they prioritize most highly their "wards of the state," for whom they feel a special sense of responsibility. They also prioritize very highly other youth whose necessary transition to independent living is imminent in terms of months. Where there is an overdemand for independent living skills group training, coordinators said they give it first to youth who have not had any such previous training and whom the workers judge to be in the greatest need.

7. What do you think are the strengths of the SELF Program?

This question was asked to find out, according to the perceptions of the SELF coordinators, the aspects of the SELF Program that are most important to maintain and build.

In response to the question, the word "flexibility" or "flexible" was used prominently and independently by nine of the coordinators. Several other coordinators singled out the same thing but in other words. Associated with praise of flexibility in use of the funds for their intended purpose was praise for the simplicity of procedures. They appreciated the ease of accessing funds and reporting their use. Many coordinators also were grateful for the relatively small amount of paperwork required by the state office of the SELF Program.

Several of those interviewed said that the simplicity of state administration and operation of the SELF Program should be a model for other programs administered by the state and operated by the counties. County agencies are experiencing increasingly severe client problems and needs. They have, however, no commensurate increase in revenues. They deeply resent, therefore, having to spend large amounts of their time on required paperwork that they do not feel benefits their work with clients.

One coordinator expressed pessimism that the SELF Program would be able to retain its simplicity. This was because in her long experience she has seen other programs start out with simple procedures but become increasingly complicated and

burdensome as time goes on. A few coordinators said that even the amount of reporting currently required by the SELF Program is too much.

Several of those interviewed said the SELF Program is the best program for their clients because it empowers county social workers to have positive relationships with the adolescents they serve. One worker cited research reports indicating that the best predictor of success for "at-risk" youth such as SELF-eligible clients, is the presence in their lives of a consistent and positive relationship with an adult. Other coordinators also indicated that the social workers who participate in the SELF Program prize the opportunity it gives them to form such positive relationships with youth. Usually they are just one more authority figure for them.

Some of the coordinators described wilderness trips on which they have accompanied youth in their independent living skills groups. According to the respondents, on such trips the young people gain self-confidence. They also learn both self-reliance and a sense of the importance of mutual reliance and inter-dependence on such trips. One coordinator maintained that very troubled youth tend to "open up" while sitting around a campfire much more readily than in a therapist's office.

Others said that the strength of the SELF Program is that it does what it is intended to do--prepare adolescents who have been in foster care for independent living.

8. What do you think are the weaknesses of the SELF Program?

This question was asked to learn from the county SELF Program coordinators the aspects of the SELF Program that it is most important to improve, from their perspective. Several of those who answered said that they couldn't think of any weaknesses in the program.

The most commonly perceived weaknesses of the SELF Program, according to the coordinators, are client eligibility restrictions in the federal regulations for the program. Many of those who answered said that there are widespread needs for independent living skills training and services for adolescents. Only some of those youth have been in foster care at some point since their sixteenth birthday as the Title IV-E-IL regulations require.

Many young people, according to the SELF coordinators, had substantial disruption in their living situations at a younger age than sixteen. Because of that, they have major gaps in their preparedness for living on their own. Some of them have run away and have been living on their own, in bad situations, since before their sixteenth birthday.

Several coordinators pointed out that there is a striking contradiction between the SELF Program funding incentives and major Minnesota DHS initiatives for family preservation. While family preservation initiatives strongly discourage removal of children from their homes to foster care, the SELF Program county funding allocation formula is based, in part, on the number

of 16-21 year old youth currently in out-of-home placement in the county. One coordinator noted that the better they do at family preservation, the worse they do in SELF funding.

More than one respondent argued that while many more families in Minnesota now may be preserved, youth in those families often have accumulated deficits in knowledge, skills, or attitudes just as do many of the youth in foster care. Such youth in the preserved families will not have access to the SELF-funded independent living skills assistance they might need.

Some coordinators said that they are seeing children age thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen who have serious problems and very much could benefit from SELF-funded service options, but they are too young to qualify and can end up receiving no such services. They might run away and be "lost" before they reach the age sixteen eligibility threshold for service. One county coordinator said that the greatest social service problem in her county is 13 to 15-year-old adolescents with problems at home.

Two of the coordinators in rural counties thought that the two largest metropolitan area counties receive a relative overemphasis from the SELF Program. One coordinator expressed the view that jobs orientation and training for youth generally is focused too exclusively on making money. It lacks focus on a youth's rightful place in the world and obligations to society. The same person felt that the SELF Program's initiatives for cultural sensitivity and competence are well-intended but not yet as they should be.

9. What do you think are the results of the SELF Program?

This question was asked, in the established context of the earlier questions, as an important measure of the success of the program. Most people, including many social scientists and program administrators, believe that quantitative data and empirical research methodology are limited severely in their ability to capture the real meaning of significant life events, social processes, and their effects. The SELF Program, in particular among social service interventions, seeks often to improve the lives of youth in deep and long-lasting ways. County SELF coordinators are in a good position to observe the results of the program. This question was to gather, from the perceptions of these expert and professional human observers, what may be the best information available about the results of the program.

The following are excerpts from answers that stand out:

> *I've seen massive changes in some of the kids. . . . one of the kids was just a mess, and she doesn't have any school credits but those she got through us. And she's working, and she's functioning, and she's living on her own now.*
>
> *Most of the youth who have been involved with the [SELF-funded grant program] have benefited a great deal from the program. They've gone on, and as far as we know have done well in living independently . . . They've picked up the skills they needed.*
>
> *It helps take away some of the barriers that are thrown in their way and might discourage or stop them. Without such*

help, probably some of those kids would wind up back in trouble, or in the legal system.

I think the SELF [Title IV-E-IL] Program has impacted the whole nation . . . I think that every time you break through the system--that cloud of bureaucracy--it begins to change the whole mass of consciousness. Social workers love SELF. They say, "I don't know what I'd do without it. . . . It's just one little program, but I think it's done miracles.

It was an observation of several of those interviewed that the independent living skills groups in their counties have a deep impact on a certain proportion of the youth who attend. They estimate that proportion to be between one-tenth and one-fifth of the young people. For such youth, they believe the difference may be that between a successful life and the life of failure, system-dependence, and/or crime that has been the family background and training of many of the clients.

One coordinator explained that for the rest of the youth, the four-fifths or nine-tenths in whom no dramatic change is seen, there are real gains that are less evident. An independent living skills group leader said that she knew, from the obvious interest and involvement she could see in group participants, that they always would remember some of the things they were being taught.

Some of the learning was very evident to another group leader who overheard one of her clients, a very young single mother, lecturing another group member who was pregnant about her obligation to take care of herself properly during her pregnancy.

One of those interviewed explained that before the SELF Program existed, the only way to get funds needed by a youth for clothes to look presentable at a job interview, or related transportation costs, or $50 to take the GED exam or to purchase textbooks, was through a county procedure for "exceptional expenses." In an effort to keep such costs under control, the process to obtain them was made extremely difficult. The coordinator estimated that prior to the SELF Program, even for such compelling human needs and exceptionally prudent use of funds, the needs were met only five or ten percent of the time.

Several counties have used some of their SELF funds to help SELF-eligible youth with payments for class photos, fees for extracurricular activities, or class trips. One coordinator said, "I believe that these small things that enable them to be like the other kids, and participate in the things that other kids do, kept them in school. . . . Through such things, I really believe that SELF has had a significant impact on many of the kids we work with."

A few of those interviewed were more cautious or noncommittal about their perceptions of the results of the program. One person said, "I really think that it's hard to judge . . . I guess you have to believe that it's going to help." Several coordinators also mentioned cases of youth for whom they had hope, and who seemed to be doing well, but later got into serious trouble again. They said, however, that they observed many more surprising successes of clients than they observed disappointing failures.

10. Purely theoretically, if the money made available to your SELF Program were doubled, how would it change what you do?

This question and the one following were asked to get a sense of the large-scale, or programmatic priorities of county SELF Program coordinators. Most answered in part that if their funding for the program were increased so substantially they would devote more of their own time and their staff's time to planning and watching over the use of the money.

Some of the coordinators said they would work more closely with the SELF Program grant-funded agency in their region to link more of their youth to the independent living skills group training offered, or to seek expanded services. Some of the coordinators from counties with small allocations said that such a substantial increase would enable them to send some of their clients to a regional group training program, an Urban Survival Skills training, or another such substantial training experience which currently they feel they cannot afford as a county.

Several of those interviewed responded promptly that such increased funding would enable them to expand their current independent living skills group training from a summer-only program to a year-round program. Most counties that conduct such groups feel strongly, based on their clients' comments and their own judgement, that the benefits of the group training to youth would be magnified if the groups could be ongoing.

A few county coordinators said that increased funding might make it possible for them to address the problem of lack of

staff time for the program. They might be able to hire an intern to facilitate or conduct the program in their county.

Some coordinators from small counties responded that such an increase in funding would make little if any difference in their county. This was because their current needs for funds for eligible clients already were being met adequately.

11. Purely theoretically, if the money made available to your SELF Program were reduced by half, how would it change what you do?

The most common response related to independent living skills group training. Most coordinators said that the group training would be retained while other services or goods, such as driver's training, level of funding for apartment "start-up" supplies, or incentive payments to youth for achievements, might be reduced or eliminated. Many of the county coordinators believe that group training is the most cost-effective aspect of the SELF Program to prepare their eligible youth for independent living.

Some of those interviewed said that they probably would reduce the level of funding of all of their activities.

One of the coordinators said that they then no longer would be able to start preparing their eligible youth for independent living a year or two ahead of time. They would have to prioritize most highly the youth who are closest to leaving care.

A coordinator from a large county responded that if there were such a substantial reduction in his county's SELF Program funding, his county might stop participating in the program. He said that if the funding were much less, it probably no longer would be worth his while to do the work required to administer the funds and program for his county.

12. *Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the SELF Program?*

This question was asked as part of an ongoing attempt during the interview process to gather knowledge and perceptions from the frame of reference of the persons interviewed, rather than based on preconceptions of the interviewer. Responses generally were brief positive comments made earlier in the interview and repeated. These were comments that the SELF Program is a good program (or outstanding program), that they are glad it exists, and that they very much hope that it continues.

Also summarized below, under this question heading, are some uncategorized comments made by the county coordinators at other points in their interviews.

Some of those interviewed were very grateful for the existence of the SELF Program but wished to express their view that the right time to intervene and provide services to affected youth is when they are very small children. They hold strongly the view that the first few years of a child's life are critical for the emotional and social development of the child. They feel that much more resources should be devoted to enabling social services to intervene where parents are neglecting their small children. It also should be easier to require parental cooperation with training in parenting skills. They think that the burden of evidence of neglect is so strict that social workers are discouraged from intervening at the time when intervention is most important.

Several county coordinators contrasted the SELF Program

with the "Families First" initiative from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to prevent out-of-home placements. Some coordinators commented on how the significant statewide move away from out-of-home placements will affect the SELF Program in the future. A few expressed concerns that keeping youth in their homes of origin will deny them eligibility for SELF-funded service that they still will need very much.

One person expressed guarded optimism about the increasingly widespread prevention efforts at the present time. She observed that there will be a generational difference in older adolescents after just a few more years. The adolescents after that time will have received as small children widespread prevention training. She thinks that these prevention efforts might result in succeeding generations of adolescents whose problems and deficits are not as severe as those seen by social services at this time.

13. *Could you please tell me about some of the clients served by the SELF Program in your county?*

This question was asked to gain a greater understanding of the types of youth served by the SELF Program. Full names never were used, and county coordinators were assured that client confidentiality would be protected through the alteration of many details of persons and circumstances that otherwise might allow a client's identification by a reader. Such alterations were made.

For 16% of SELF clients served during 1992, the reason (or one of the reasons) for out-of-home placement was sexual abuse. Such a statistic is ambiguous and uncertain in its implications.

The effect is quite different when several veteran county social workers state that every one of the dozen or so young people in their independent living skills group was a victim of major sexual abuse and several subsequently were perpetrators of sexual abuse. If these situations never were substantiated legally, as such matters seldom are, they may not be recorded on official forms. Some workers stated that in their own counties and around the state exist numerous known situations of pervasive intrafamilial sexual abuse (incest). Only very rarely can county social services or the criminal justice system intervene. No intervention generally is possible because the children are afraid to report or testify against the family members who are abusing and raping them.

According to the county SELF Program coordinators, such

is the background of many of the youth eligible for, and served by the SELF Program. Many other youth, and some of the same youth, have been exposed to terrible violence. Some were in the company of close friends or siblings who were murdered in their presence. The parents of many of the youth have been criminals or chronic alcoholics.

Some of the youth are orphans, very good and well-behaved young people according to their social workers, but their step-parents kicked them out for no reason and they are on their own.

Some of the children served by the SELF Program are without a mother because she was murdered by their father, and subsequently they were sexually abused by their grandparents. One county coordinator stated that when you read about some horror story in the newspaper, the children involved become social service clients, and at age sixteen become eligible for the SELF Program.

Of course, the young people from the most horrible backgrounds tend to be vivid in the memories of their social workers. Perhaps these are the cases most readily recalled for discussion. Such stories, however, were related again and again by county coordinators in many different locations. Those familiar with county social services know that usually they do not remove children from homes because of small problems.

Following are some brief descriptions of clients who were eligible for the SELF Program in Minnesota, and for whom SELF Program funds were used. These descriptions are in the words of those interviewed.

CLIENT A

"One client is a refugee unaccompanied minor. She's doing excellently in the foster home she's in. She's an honors student who will be graduating this year and will be going to St. Cloud State University next year. Last year, or the year before, SELF funds were used to get her a computerized English dictionary. It really helped her with her speaking of English. It speaks and pronounces the words. It costs about $200. The foster parents say that it has helped the girl more than anything else."

CLIENT B

"Another client, a female, has been in foster care since she was 13 years old; the reason for placement probably was physical and sexual abuse by her father. She is graduating from high school this year. She's doing real well. She's going on to college. I don't believe she has a family to go to. When she turns 18 she'll be totally on her own. This year, SELF funds were used to pay the fees for her college applications ($15 apiece), and to buy her sheets, an iron, an alarm clock, and other basic items for living in a dormitory starting next Fall."

CLIENT C

"For one kid, we paid for part of a trip to France. She was very involved in school with French language studies. She was a very smart kid who came from a really dysfunctional family. After her

junior year of high school, her foster parents were going to France and volunteered to pay for her air fare. We paid for an additional month in France for the girl to stay for a month with a French family. She had some ambitions to continue her education. We felt that this would really encourage her to do that. This girl who we helped with the trip to France now is at Gustavus Adolphus College. She got a full scholarship, based on her work in French, mainly. She got a foreign language scholarship. Would that girl have gone on to college without having had the trip to France? Who knows? I think it helped for her scholarship application, to show that she did that. Recently, I heard that she currently is on the Dean's list at college; she's an honor's student. She had taken care of her mom and siblings since the time she was about seven years old. She entered placement at age sixteen. She now is about 21. Anybody would have predicted that by now she would have had two or three babies and be on public assistance, probably with some of her own children in placement. As far as I'm concerned, SELF made a significant difference. If we got 15 or 20 thousand dollars for our whole program that year, this one kid sure made that whole difference. She could have cost our county, the state, and the federal government a whole lot more, had she not done what she could. It was a good investment."

CLIENT D

"One of the kids we have now is a 16-year-old girl who has been in foster care since January, but since she was placed in foster care

her birth parents have left the state. She was removed from her parents because of physical, sexual, and emotional maltreatment. They fled to Tennessee before charges could be filed. The authorities in Tennessee have been informed about what happened here. This girl is not going to have any resources at all to help her when she moves into independent living. Her closest relatives are in the Duluth area. So, she basically is going to be dependent on the SELF program to help her with the things she is going to need to live on her own.

So far, this girl has been doing real well. I'm sure that at some point she is going to have a lot of issues to deal with. She has been getting a lot of support from her foster family. It's kind of amazing the way the other kids have rallied around her when they found out that her parents had left. They brought her clothes and other stuff. She also has been involved in counseling. We used SELF funds to help her pay for warm-up clothes for track and field activities at school. She works part-time and is doing really well at school. We also used some funds to help her start purchasing apartment supplies. We start early, because it usually takes a lot to start your own apartment. We have some foster parents here who are really good at that. They sit down with the kids and make lists of everything they will need, and they don't forget anything!"

CLIENT E

"Another client was a girl who was in foster care all through high

school. She was removed from her parents due to sexual abuse by her father and brother. After high school she went right into independent living and on to a bible college. She was one of the kids we sent to Outward Bound, and also helped with apartment supplies. She also is the one who has a car, and we helped out with tires one time. We also gave her an emancipation grant when she graduated from high school. That was because she was such a special responsible kid. We were sure she would spend the money carefully on things she really needed. She was a real good kid and did a lot of good things. She got married last summer. They are moving to another state for her husband's job, but she is planning to continue with college."

CLIENT F

"Last year we had a teen mom--she was 17 years old and pregnant at the time. When she first found out that she was pregnant, the father of the baby was in jail. Her birth dad lives 30 miles away, and she still sees him somewhat. Her brother lives here in town and she still sees him. Her birth mom lives out west. When her mom found out her daughter was pregnant and was going to have this baby and wanted to keep it, she called up the girl's social worker and told her that she wanted to adopt her daughter's baby without her daughter's knowledge.

The girl turned eighteen in October. When I saw her she still was in foster care and didn't want to go back to high school. This had to do with the fact that she would be way behind at high

school after having the baby. So we got her worked into the alternative school. She wants to go on to a community college or vocational/technical college. I worked with her to arrange for her to do work ahead in the alternative school so she could take some time off from it after she had the baby. That went well. She has, since then, talked with people about getting in STRIDE so she can get through school. She has made the arrangements for college. She's living independently. She made arrangements on her own for her apartment, so that the landlord would hold it for her without a deposit for when she got out of foster care."

CLIENT G

"Another case involved a sixteen year old girl who came to our attention about two years ago. She was a refugee unaccompanied minor who was married at age sixteen and having problems with her husband. They were living with an aunt and uncle in a town near here. Through the county attorney and the courts system we wound up getting custody of this girl. I put her in a group home. She ran away from it three times. She didn't want to listen, and was very male-dependent. She had a new boyfriend in every town she went to. Before she got here, since age 11 she had been in 19 or 20 different placements. A few of those were relative placements. I'm not sure what her mother's problems were, but this girl just kept getting passed from one place to another. She never really felt wanted, or that she could bond with anybody.

She has had difficulties in wanting [not wanting] to

participate in her family where she is placed, even though they really want her to participate. She has a baby in foster care. The baby was born in April. The foster parents she was with at that time were very upset about her pregnancy. We even were worried that they wouldn't keep her with them because of that. They are very strict and have their own values, and so on. But they worked on that, and I think they're happy they did, because she took good care of herself during her pregnancy. She finished two years of high school in one year. That wasn't the easy way--by a GED--but by doing home schooling and going to alternative school.

We used SELF funds to help pay for her textbooks for the home school program. They were kind of expensive, and the foster parents were not going to pay for that. We also used SELF money for her shared transportation to and from school, which was 25 or 30 miles away. Without that money spent in support of our plan for her to finish high school, I don't see how she would have finished high school. She was so far behind and in such a difficult situation that I don't think she would have followed through on that on her own; and then, she would not be in college now. We also used SELF funds to help her with money management--teaching budgeting, rewarding savings, and so on. This helped her learn to be more responsible with money. It was very hard.

The foster parents really pushed her, and there was a time she wanted to quit. She called me and said she wanted to get out of foster care. But then she got back on track. She also wanted to break up with the father of her baby, because she had gone to visit her mother in Arizona for two weeks and met a new boyfriend

there. But now she is back with the father of her baby, and they both are enrolled to go to college in the Fall. That seems to be a success story. I hope it stays that way! She was a tough one. I put a lot of hours into dealing with the times she ran away, but gradually it seemed to settle down over the two years. Now, it seems like she's doing well, and I'm really happy for her."

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The 1992 Evaluation of the Title IV-E-IL SELF Program in Minnesota shows that the program is excellent. At all levels of operation, program administrators and workers are striving continuously for improvement in quality of service and for benefit to youth in need. The following conclusions may be drawn from the evidence gathered in this evaluation:

- *Youth in need, who have been in foster care, benefit significantly from services and goods provided through the SELF Program. This is evident from large numbers of client comments reporting major vocational, self-reliance, and self-esteem gains from the program. It is evident from the results of objective pre- and post-testing of independent living skills group participants. It is evident in the large proportion of SELF Program clients who stay in school. It is most evident of all in the comments and specific case history reports by county SELF Program coordinators throughout Minnesota.*

- *Flexibility of the SELF Program in use of funds for eligible client needs, and simplicity of program reporting requirements, were praised by the county SELF Program coordinators. Clearly, independently, and repeatedly they asked for other DHS programs to become like the SELF Program in those ways. Therefore, the SELF Program, and those responsible for it at all levels, should be vigilant to protect those features of the program.*

- *Most youth served by the SELF Program apparently do not end up on General Assistance, AFDC, or Food Stamps. This is the preliminary indication from a one-year follow-up of youth served by the SELF Program. Data from this study make clear the importance of longer-term follow-up of served youth. They also reveal the need for an expanded follow-up sample or oversampling of youth of color. This is necessary to make meaningful comparisons among group outcomes. It also is needed to target services appropriately based on that information.*

- *DHS should increase its assistance to counties to help them find ways to hire interns or staff to coordinate their local SELF Program. Generally, those counties that underutilize the program attributed that problem to overextension of their staff. Such staff lack time to perform even the simple procedures required by the SELF Program. Other counties have solved that problem through employment of a part-time SELF Program coordinator or intern.*

- *Future program planning should address the needs of 18-21 year old youth who are eligible for SELF-funded service but are not open county cases. Such youth rarely are served by the SELF Program.*

- *A profound benefit of the SELF Program, and an unanticipated outcome, is that it has resulted in the mending and building of positive relationships between troubled youth and their social workers. Several county coordinators independently reported that it is the best program, or the only program, that enables their social workers to relate with their clients consistently on a positive basis.*

- *Results of pre- and post-testing for independent living skills knowledge and attitudes of participating youth lead to three main conclusions: 1) Youth attending the groups make significant gains in important areas of knowledge and attitudes for successful independent living; 2) Youth who attend SELF-funded independent living skills groups in Minnesota generally are literate and possess much of the knowledge and attitudes they will need when they are on their own; and, 3) Many of the youth have striking and dangerous gaps in their otherwise good base of knowledge and good attitudes. These gaps are in the areas of human relationships, personal health and safety, and a number of other critical areas. With caring and consistent parenting, such gaps may be less likely to persist. For these youth, many of whom have lacked such consistent parenting, the state, through the SELF Program and any other available means, should intensify its efforts to educate and prepare them for independent living.*

APPENDIX

JANIS-FIELD FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY SCALE

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the sentences below and mark an "x" in the box that best describes you.

		very often	fairly often	some-times	once in a great while	practically never
1.	How often do you worry about whether other people like to be with you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	How often do you feel sure of yourself among strangers?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	How often do you feel confident that someday people you know will look up to you and respect you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	How often do you feel self-conscious?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	How often do you feel that you have handled yourself well at a party?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	How often are you comfortable when starting a conversation with people whom you don't know?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	How often are you troubled with shyness?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	When you speak in a class discussion, how often do you feel sure of yourself?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	When you have to talk in front of a class or a group of people of your own age, how often are you pleased with your performance?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	How often do you worry about how well you get along with other people?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Client Comments Transcribed from 90-day Follow-up Forms

Clients were asked to explain what they liked or didn't like about the SELF Program.

I think that this program has been very supportive and helped me to find out where I can go if I have a legal problem, etc.

The SELF Program helped me be able to get ready for living on my own.

I learned a lot in this program. I know now how life is on your own: lots of bills, insurance, etc. Thank you for allowing me to be in the program. It will be beneficial.

I thought it was great because the people that did help me were mellow about a lot of things that normally my parents would be hyper about. I would be glad to do this again!

I really appreciate the funds I got from this program. It is going to be a big help in helping me to get in my own place and furnish it with supplies I will need.

I really feel I have gained a lot from SELF Program. I have learned how to lead more of an independent life. I feel the group will help me when I decide to get out of my group home.

I learned to get along with people, work hard, etc., and had lots of fun.

I like that the people are always willing to help and they never criticize anyone! I didn't like the group times. I have to drive so far to get there.

The money was very useful. I appreciate the help from your program.
I like the caring leaders who will go out of their way to help me deal with problems concerning money, health, emotional and physical. Continue supporting this group because it truly helps people.

The SELF fund is excellent because you are helping out us who can't get their

stuff by themselves. I really like the SELF fund.

We had a lot of good speakers that came and talked about abuse, rape, etc.--everyday crisis situations.

What I liked about the help is that we have rights as tenants from having a speaker come in and talk about apartments, and that there was group every week and I looked forward to it.

The money I have received from the SELF Program has helped me prepare for independent living because I appreciated it greatly and I coupled it with my work paychecks. The reason I don't give this program an excellent rating is because it is just a handout to a lot of the foster brothers and sisters I grew up with. Only a foster kid who is serious about making it on his or her own will put this money toward a goal of independent living. The definition of independent living to me is this: using the government's money to become independent of the programs.

I liked retreats we had and talks.

I got the money which I desperately needed to pay for the things that come with independent living.

They were extremely concerned about my welfare after I reached 18 and wanted to help make the transition as easy as possible.

They teach you a lot like responsibility and how to appreciate people and things. And if you ever have a problem they are always there. Also they show you how to organize events and help you learn more about current issues and careers.

The program helped me with independence and responsibility. It was also a lot of fun.

It helped me buy tools to become a mechanic. Without that money, I could never have been able to buy them for myself.

I liked all the help I've got. It really helped me out a lot!

I liked how they helped us know more about independent living and other things. I enjoyed the retreats and group meetings because then you get to know more

about the people in your group.

I used the money to pay insurance on my vehicle. It put me ahead of my bills so that I can save money for my schooling at the technical college.

I've been learning a lot about what to do in an emergency and where the phone numbers are to call and also about solving problems or dealing with difficult situations.

The SELF Program made me aware of all my resources in communities. I learned about applying for work, apartment-hunting, and communicating with others to find every day answers that could help when you have low income.

It helped me improve my skills.

It was very helpful. I'm glad there are programs to help people.

I went on a St. Cloud city bus for the first time ever in my life.

I thought that the SELF Program helped me a lot getting stuff for an apartment, and the person I was working with.

I loved it. Just a break from everything was great. I learned and saw so much. I had a real good time.

I liked the program because I got to meet different people. It helped me to get a different look on life.

I like the program because it talked about what kind of stuff that happens to me.

It has helped people in need. It gave them a chance to have stuff they need. Many things cost so much. It is sometimes hard to come up with money.

I liked everything about the group. It gave me a chance to learn some things and meet people.

I learned many things, like how to buy a car and how to save money, and many other things. SELF helped me a lot. They helped me learn good things and they gave me money when I needed it.

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I liked it very well because it helped me with my life.

It was helpful to me and my daughter. It gave me more hope and I believe it would help a lot more people.

I liked it a lot and the people that I met and the things we all did together.

I have no complaints about the SELF Program save one. It takes way too long for me to get my SELF money.

People could talk to others and work out problems and learn trust, and learn how to cope with feelings in a better way.

Within a matter of days I had money for work clothes as well as driver's training.

My social worker didn't think I needed the classes but thought I could benefit from the program in other ways.

I enjoyed it. I learned a lot and I had fun. I learned a lot of things about how to do things that are necessary without the proper equipment, and I had fun and made lots of friends.

SELF helped me receive my driver's license. If it was not for SELF I would have never been able to do it without the help of SELF.

I liked going to work.

I liked how they taught you different ways to do things. And their attitudes.

It taught me to make a budget to fit your budget and I have a hard time with spending money. I also liked the awareness on STD's and the trip to Boundary Waters was great for survivor skills.

I received SELF funds to attend Voyageur Outward Bound School and buy the necessary equipment for my course. I also received funds when I moved into independent living to buy items I would not have been able to afford. Outward Bound was a very special and valuable learning experience that may not have been possible without the aid of SELF funds.

I don't need a lot of help but they do give me all I need.

I liked all the information they gave us about many topics. I needed the gift certificates that they gave for going to the meetings. I didn't realize that we got them for going until recently and I used it for school supplies.

The help that I got from the group helped me very much.

I learned where to go for recreational activities. Learned where to shop. What goals I have for myself.

Now that I've been out of the program I'm using the info given me more after.

It helped me to know what independent living is.

I liked going to YWCA.

It helped me learn how to manage money.

They helped me go to school and get my nursing assistant certificate, plus they helped pay for First Aid and CPR. They also helped with me getting my driver's license.

I liked that we did things as a group. It makes you feel like you've done something worth while in your life. The group makes you feel welcome and good about yourself.

It was all good for me cause it helped me live on my own and also to raise my daughter now.

I liked the group activities and the cooperation between other my age.

I was able to use the money to prepare myself to live on my own–by purchasing dishes, blankets, pillows, kitchen utensils, pots and pans, and other useful things I will need.

I liked it a lot.

I attended a class to gain skills for independent living. We explored how to buy a

car and grocery shopping, etc. I have started a savings account for college. I received money to go on the school band trip to Canada. Thank you!

Our leaders were very nice and we did a lot of fun things.

I liked how the group is presented. It is presented in the way as "Come as you want." Also the help with transportation. This has been very helpful to get to the group. Also I like the things that I have learned. It has helped in making my decisions.

I like everything because they showed us what we need to know at our own speed.

The help that I had gotten from the program was very helpful to me then, and will be helpful to me in the future when I am living on my own. The group leaders taught us what we needed to know and acted like friends by talking to us individually when we looked depressed or sad. I liked everything about the group.

I learned a lot about my self and how I'm going to carry through with my plans for the future. I really liked the whole program except rock climbing.

I liked how they explained the things you need to know. Every thing was explained real clear.

It helped me get the things I need for when I go out on my own.

I feel like I got a lot of help, enough for me to mark the "very good" box, but not enough help to make me mark the "excellent" box. I did like the help because the people that helped me were really nice to me, and I liked that.

I liked getting together with people my age.

I thought that the program helped me a lot. I realized that only I can accomplish my goals.

It helped me get cleaning stuff, towels, dishes, pans, and other things I needed to set up my house.

I really didn't get anything from this. I just went to work. But I can say I learned to be very responsible.

The SELF Program has given me a lot of financial support and it has given me an opportunity to get a good start in life.

I appreciated that money was available to help me.

The money I received from SELF was well timed and it helped me to pay application fees and related expenses for college. I also needed the money to help pay for my high school graduation gown.

I liked the chance to get out of the house and meet with other people. I also liked learning things, doing the crafts, and being able to discuss my problems/concerns with my peers and someone who knows what they're talking about.

I thought the SELF group program was wonderful. It helped me in a lot of ways, such as parenting skills, abuse (and how to get help), bargain shopping, self-esteem.

I thought the help was great! There wasn't a thing I didn't like.

They are very supportive. They help us with our problems and they treat us like an adult, not like a kid.

I didn't get to attend all sessions because I had a baby and had to tend to her. What I did attend was very helpful. I learned a lot. Very nice instructors.

I really enjoyed being in the SELF Program. It taught me so much about what I need to know in the future when I become independent. It was an excellent program.

I'm moving out on my own soon in a couple of weeks, but I planned and organized what I'm going to need and how I'm going to get it. SELF helped me.

The SELF Program is great because I feel that it gives people who need the help a start when they go out on their own.

I really liked it a lot.

It was too hard to make long distance calls to get what I needed approved. I need money before purchasing items.

I was in it for two years. This year it was much more informative. They had a large variety of different and important information from apartments, fire, law enforcement, meal planning, grooming, health, safety, and different types of insurance.

They helped me find a job.

I wanted to thank you to the SELF Program, because they helped me a lot when I was in the program and the first time I was living on my own.

I applied for a job, but never got one.

With the SELF fund, I was able to buy a lot of useful things for my school as well as for my hobby. For example, I like to play guitar and SELF funds enabled me to buy one. I needed a bike to get around the University campus. They gave me the money to buy one.

They did a lot of things this year to help us learn things that we didn't know. We are all really disappointed though that we might not get to attend next year. We all feel there is always more to learn.

I liked the counselor we had, and I learned how to do things on my own, like how to handle the problems in this world, like getting my own apartment, and living on my own.

I liked it cause it helped me a lot by helping to find a good place of my own and what I should look for.

After I graduated from high school, SELF wrote me a check for $150 which helped me with my getting a start on my independent living skills.

Because of the SELF Program I was able to get out of an unhealthy situation and come home.

It taught me a lot of things that would help me in my future with everyday living.

I like the SELF Program because I would be able to take driver's education. I appreciate you for helping me.

This program is helping me for the future in making decisions in money, and in finding a home.

The help was great. Our counselors were very helpful and understanding.

I didn't like going to the class or the trips because it occupied much of my time. Yet I also didn't like the playing games and drawing as much as I would like to learn more of the world I'm entering.

Since I get no help from my parents for things, the money I received from SELF has allowed me to be prepared for college and living on my own. I don't know what I would've done without it. Thank you.

Gave me ideas on ways to set up goals and ways to work towards them.

I liked the SELF Program very much. It helped me to know what kinds of places to go to--to find things that weren't so expensive, and they taught me what you should look for in an apartment. They also taught us how to shop for foods, clothes, dishes, and many more things that won't cost you so much money.

The budgeting part has been most helpful so far.

SELF gave me a better understanding of the real world. It showed me how to budget my money and to be more independent.

It helped me realize how expensive independent living would be and what to expect, it helped prepare me for the "rough road" ahead so it wasn't so rough. Our group leader was a great help!

I managed to get everything for my house besides furniture. Without it I would not have anything.

The SELF Program helped me out a lot when it came to independent living supplies that I needed. I just wish there was a program that would help me out

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with more recent situations. Like right now, I'm a senior and there are a lot of things I need help with but no one seems to understand that or even want to listen.

I learned about finding metropolitan resources. They taught us about urban survival skills. Counselors were too negative ("we need to do, we have to do").

I liked the program very much. It helped to understand that other kids was going through the same thing I was and that I wasn't the only one. And I became more confident about myself.

I worked on a budget plan to learn how I will do when I move on my own, learned about sex and dating, and learned about dieting and good nutrition.

We had special talks where everybody in the group had things alike and it made me feel better that I wasn't the only one like that.

From the trip to the Boundary Waters I learned a lot about myself and others. I learned to work together as a group.

I liked that I was able to get a start on my future especially with furniture and with my apartment.

It was fun.

The people were excellent and taught us a lot.

It gave me money that was useful. I got rollerblades, new clothes, and it went toward my down payment toward Concordia Language Village.

This group and our group leader is the best thing that ever happened to me.

It took awhile for me to be reimbursed for the first part of the money I made.

On the last retreat I didn't feel comfortable and there was something happening before I went on the retreat at home and during the retreat I was having some problems with the group leader and when I said that I was going to call my mom to come get me she said that it would be my last retreat because it happened before. So I'm no longer going to the retreats. It did turn out that I stayed.

I like it all. It's helped me identify myself in ways and it's lots of fun.

I met a lot of people who were nice and know how I feel about things that parents don't understand.

It helped me in many ways to get what I wanted.

The worker who helped me was very nice to work with. SELF helped me buy baby items for three months. It really helped out my expenses a lot.

The SELF group helped me greatly.

It was okay, but have it earlier in the year.

I liked the help my social worker offered and gave me to get out on my own. The money helped me buy the essential items I needed to start out.

I received $200 to buy household items. This really helped out because I've lived in foster homes most of my life and don't have much. It was discussed with me. I was told what to get and what I couldn't get. Very helpful!

After the group was over I felt a lot better about my self and learned how to deal with stress.

I got good ideas on how to get a job, and took driver's education. I feel it's really good that the state has something like this for teenagers and I hope it continues.

It gave me the tools I needed to get a job.

It taught me how to live on my own, get a job, and other living skills. I got help with family problems, and school.

I appreciate it. I just wish there was more, I could use it.

I enjoyed the program very much! I liked the make-up session and haircuts. And I also believe that the grocery shopping and cooking practices helped out a lot for going out on a person's own, as I am. Your program is GREAT. Thanks.

It helped prepare me to live alone. I have no doubt that the SELF Program is

very beneficial. I only wish it could start preparing me and other foster kids like myself sooner than later on in the senior year.

The help was good because it helped me to become more independent and enabled me to take piano lessons which without this program I wouldn't be able to.

I don't have many questions. But the SELF Program has showed me I'm not alone. And there is help out there. It's helped with my finances and laws. There's much more, but no more room. Thank you!

This year the SELF Program helped me buy books for school. I like the program because it was all arranged by my social worker. I had no difficult forms to fill out.

It will all help me now and in the future I hope, the learning and being with different people is neat.

I was able to stay in school because SELF paid for car insurance.

I liked the help we got with budgeting money which helped my self-esteem, so I am not as worried as to how I am going to raise this baby.

I learned a lot and gained a lot of information useful to living on my own.

I learned a great deal from independent living skills. Thank you.

I thing that the program I was in had too many people in one group. I think I would have learned more if the volume of the group was smaller.

I learned a lot and I appreciate it.